DRAGON AGE™

WRAITHS OF TEVINTER

NUNZIO **DeFILIPPIS** CHRISTINA **WEIR** FERNANDO HEINZ **FURUKAWA** MICHAEL **ATIYEH**

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Illustration by Sachin Teng

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This volume collects the Dark Horse comic book series Dragon Age: Deception *#1–#3,*
Dragon Age: Blue Wraith *#1–#3, and* Dragon Age: Dark Fortress *#1–#3.*

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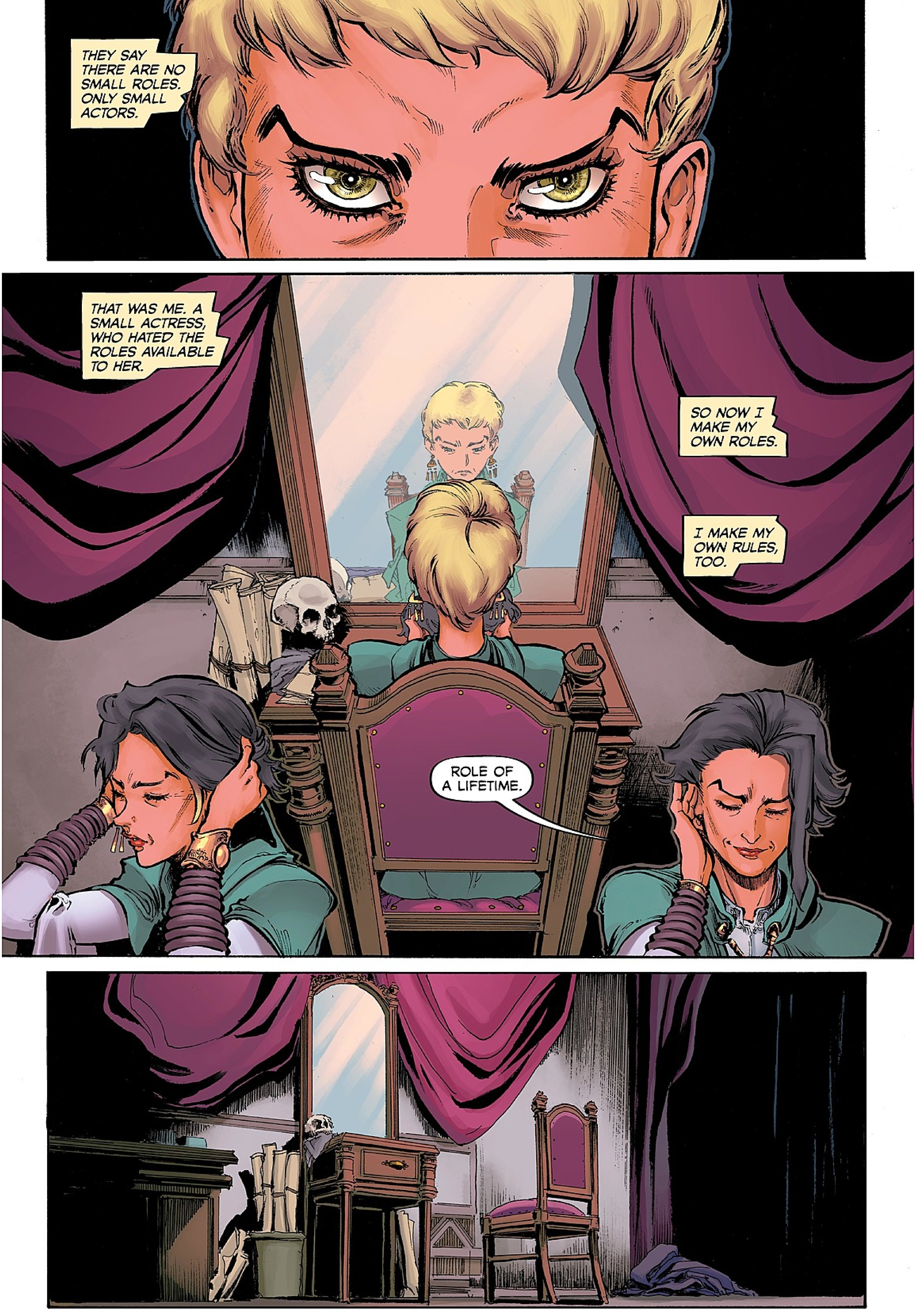
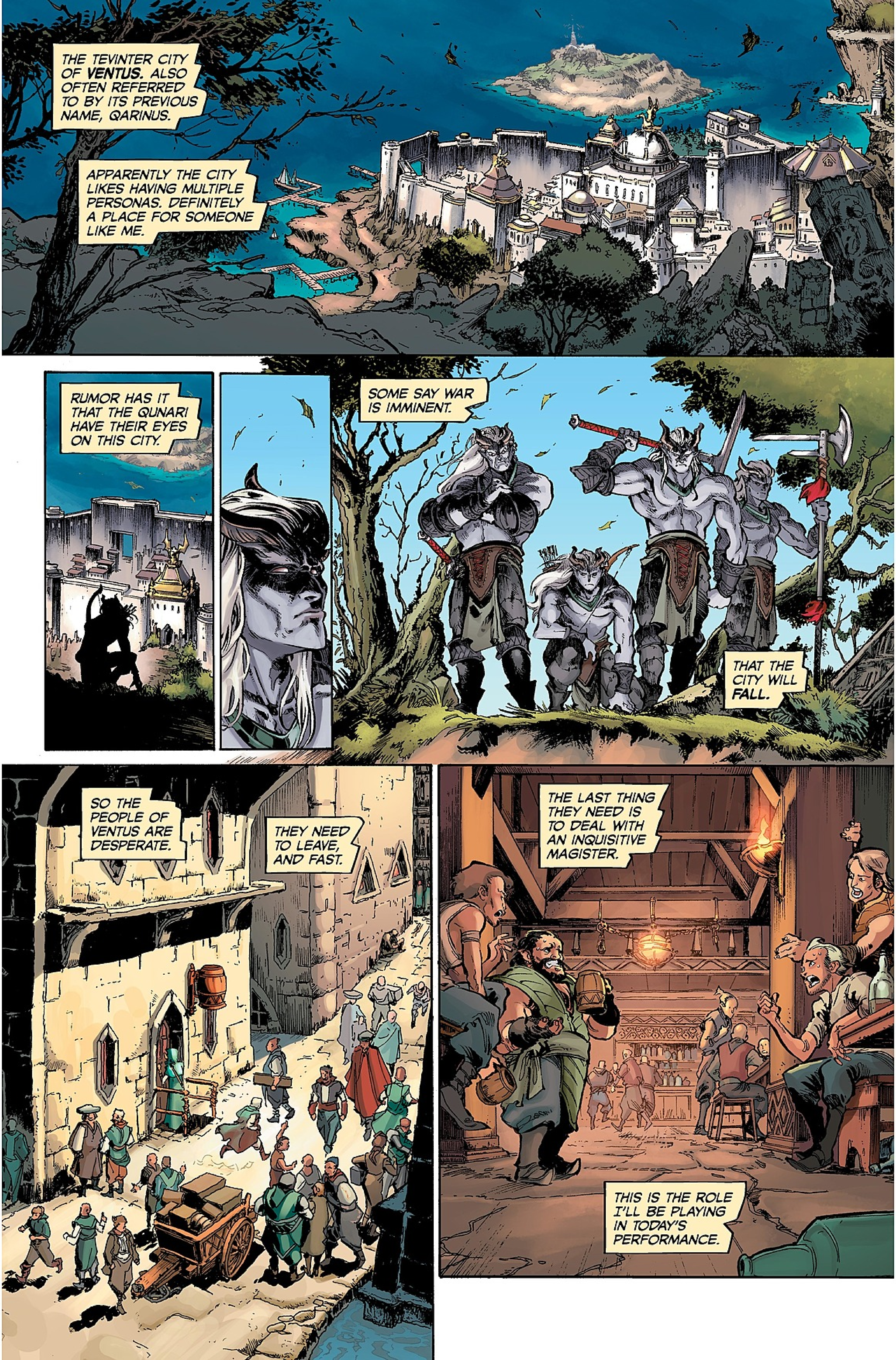
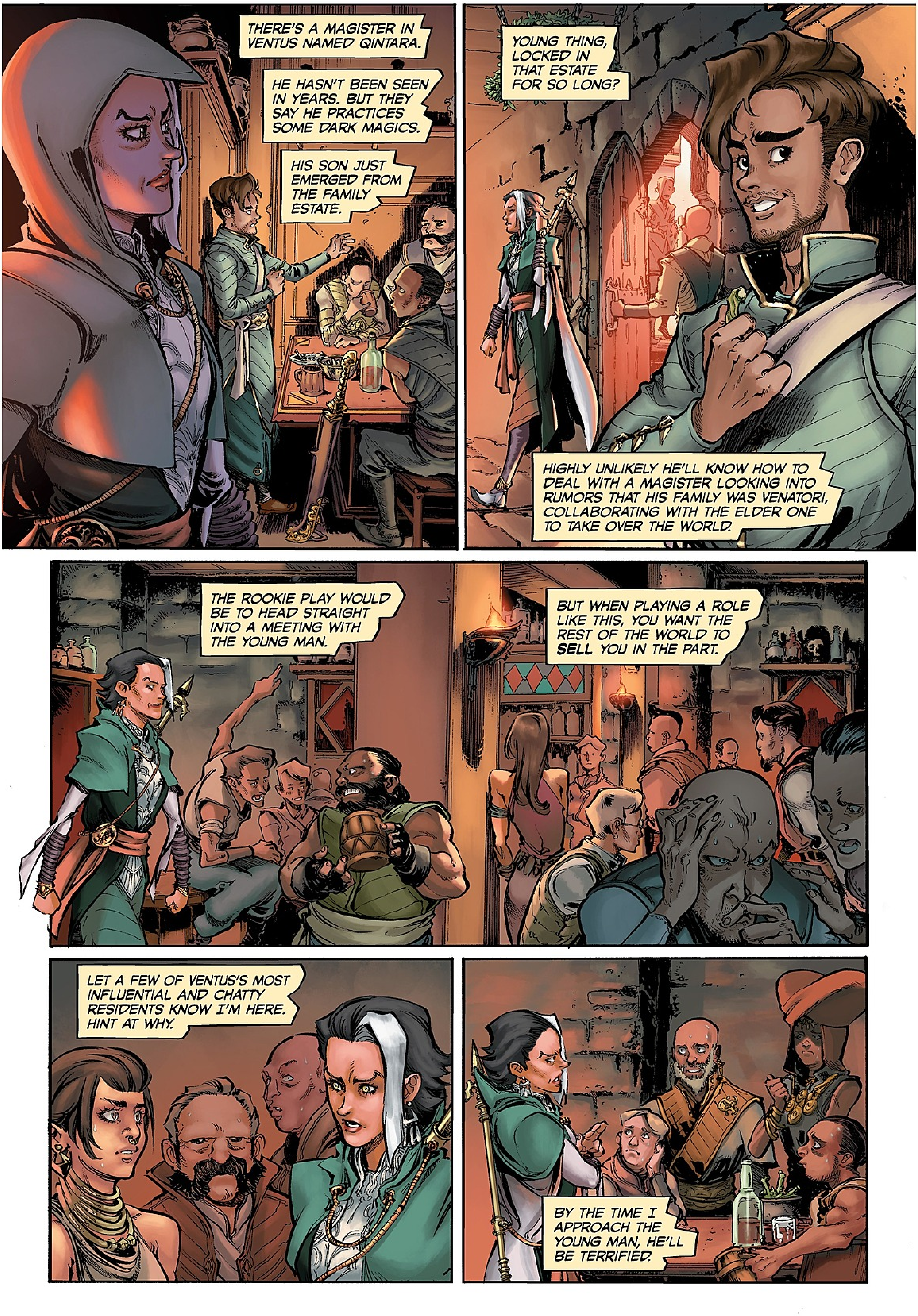
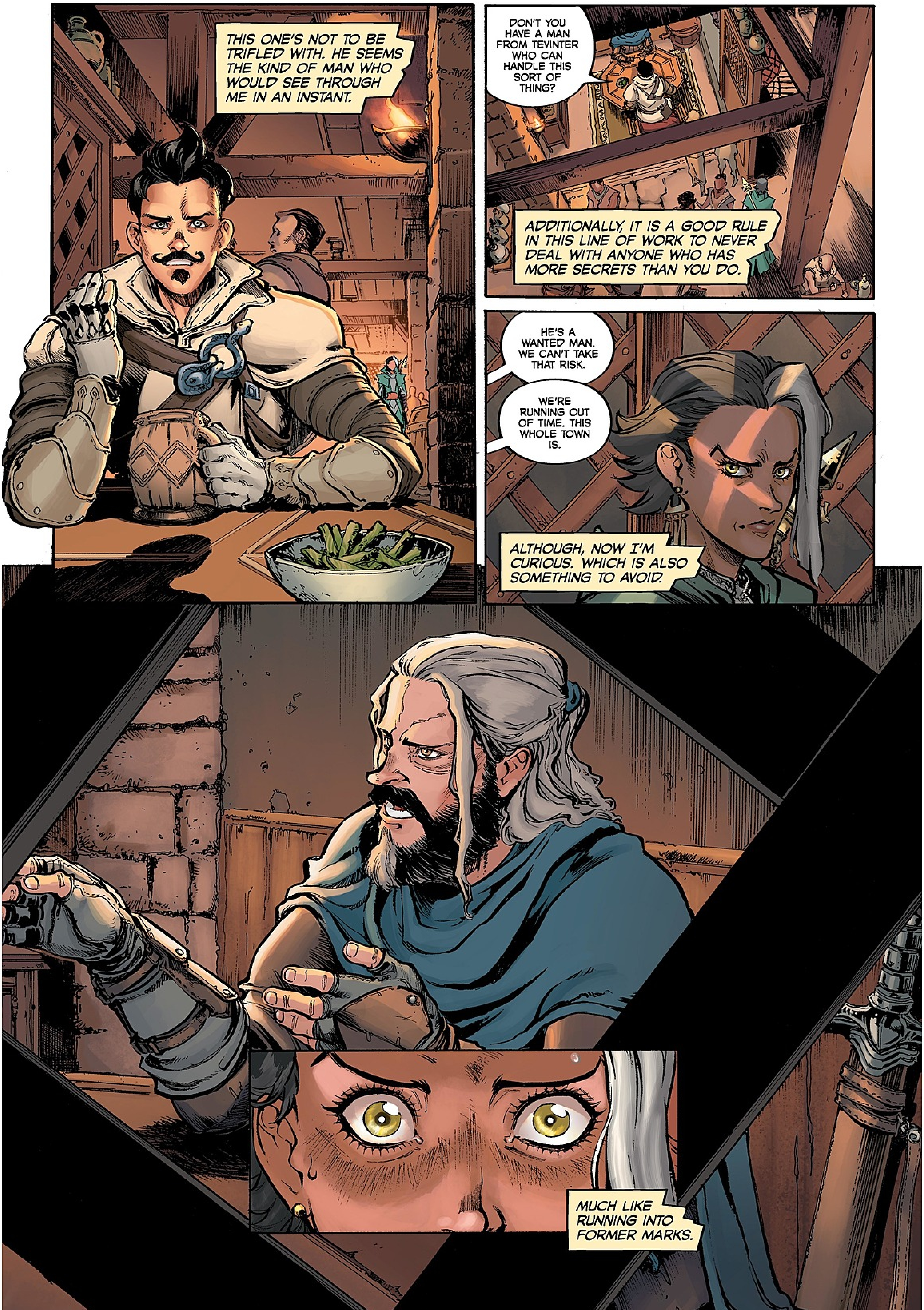
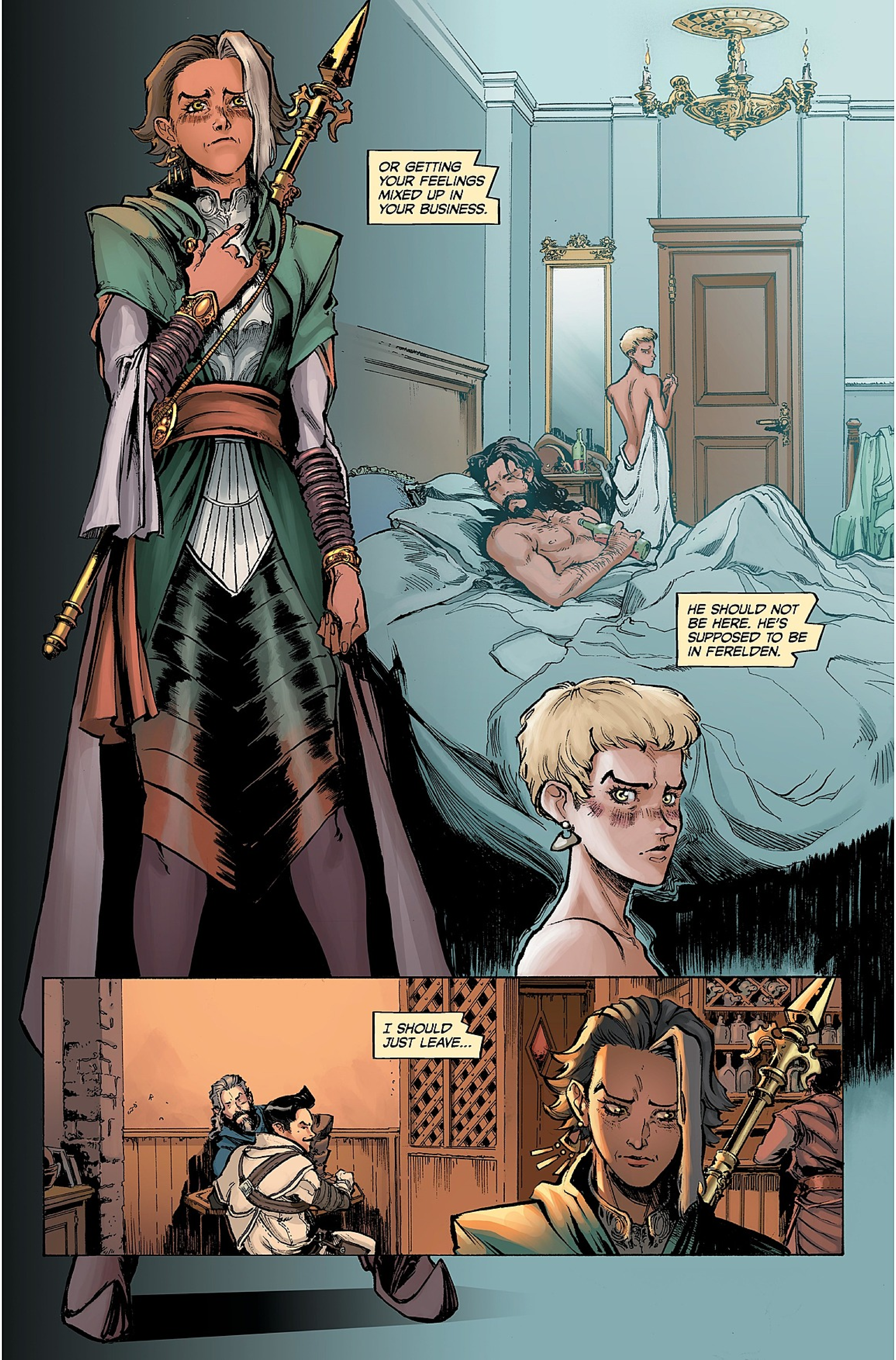
DECEPTION

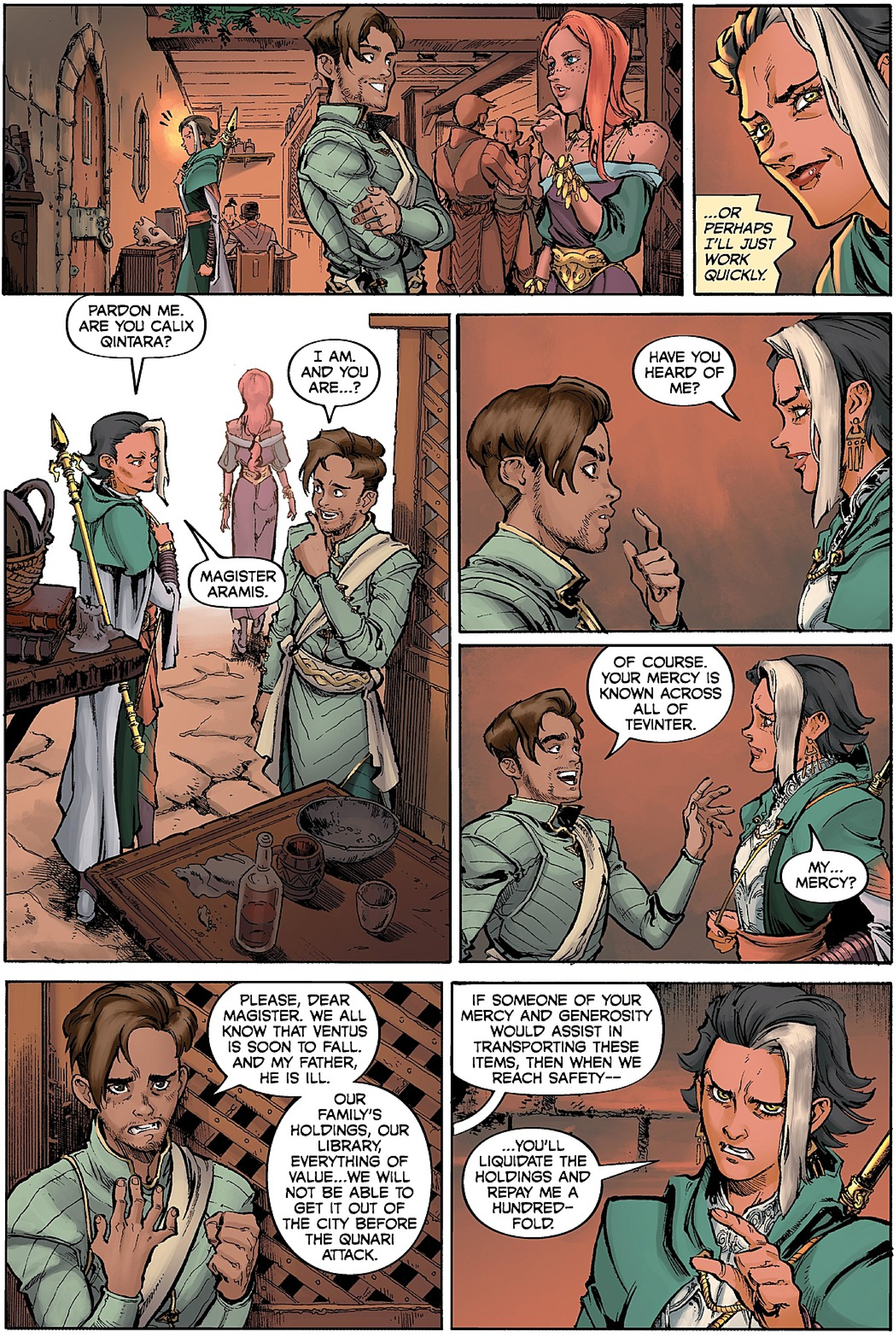

THEY SAY THERE ARE NO SMALL ROLES. ONLY SMALL ACTORS.
THAT WAS ME. A SMALL ACTRESS, WHO HATED THE ROLES AVAILABLE TO HER.
SO NOW I MAKE MY OWN ROLES.
I MAKE MY OWN RULES, TOO.
ROLE OF A LIFETIME.

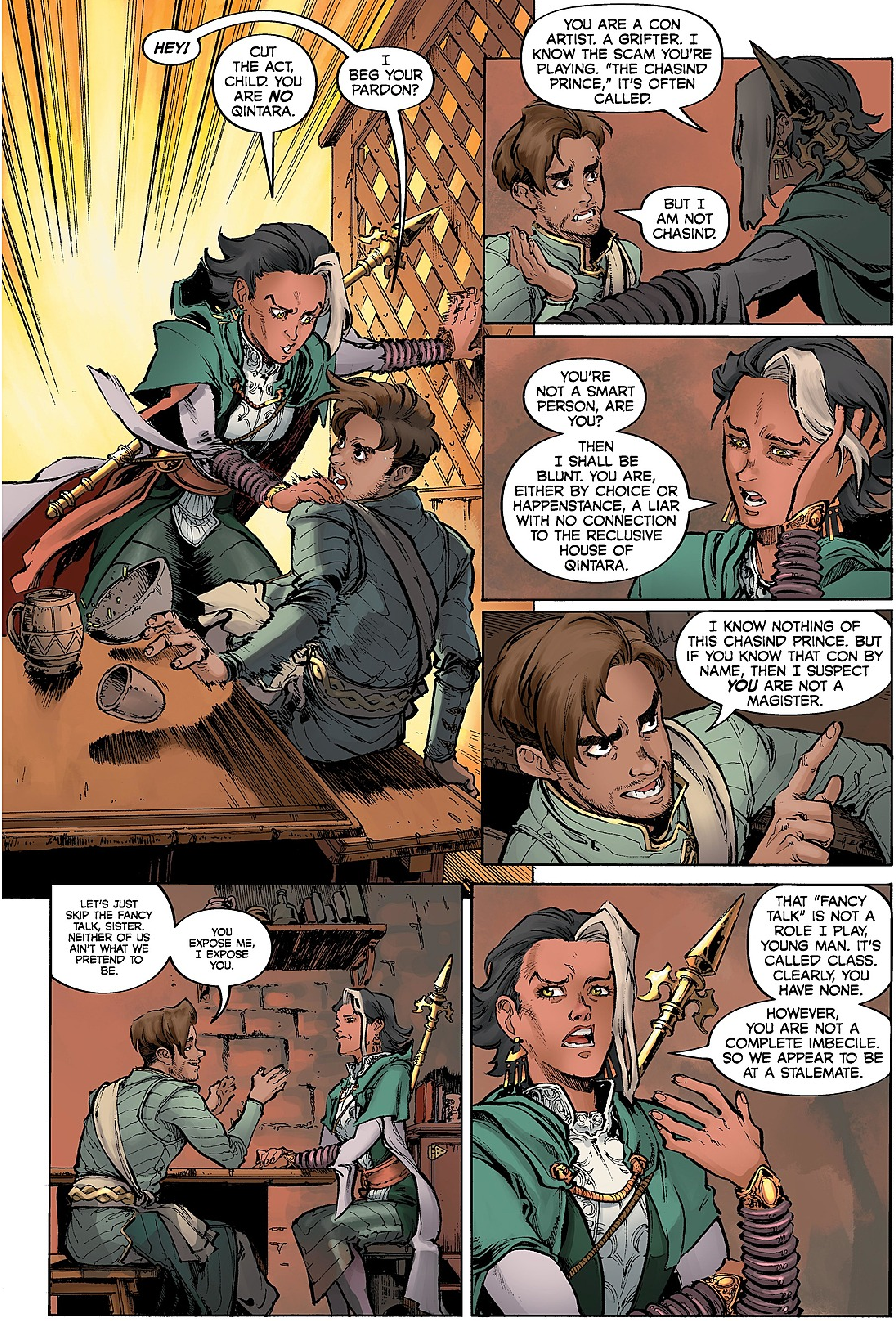

THE TEVINTER CITY OF VENTUS. ALSO OFTEN REFERRED TO BY ITS PREVIOUS NAME, QARINUS.
APPARENTLY THE CITY LIKES HAVING MULTIPLE PERSONAS. DEFINITELY A PLACE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME.
RUMOR HAS IT THAT THE QUNARI HAVE THEIR EYES ON THIS CITY.
SOME SAY WAR IS IMMINENT.
THAT THE CITY WILL FALL.
SO THE PEOPLE OF VENTUS ARE DESPERATE.
THEY NEED TO LEAVE, AND FAST.
THE LAST THING THEY NEED IS TO DEAL WITH AN INQUISITIVE MAGISTER.
THIS IS THE ROLE I'LL BE PLAYING IN TODAY'S PERFORMANCE.

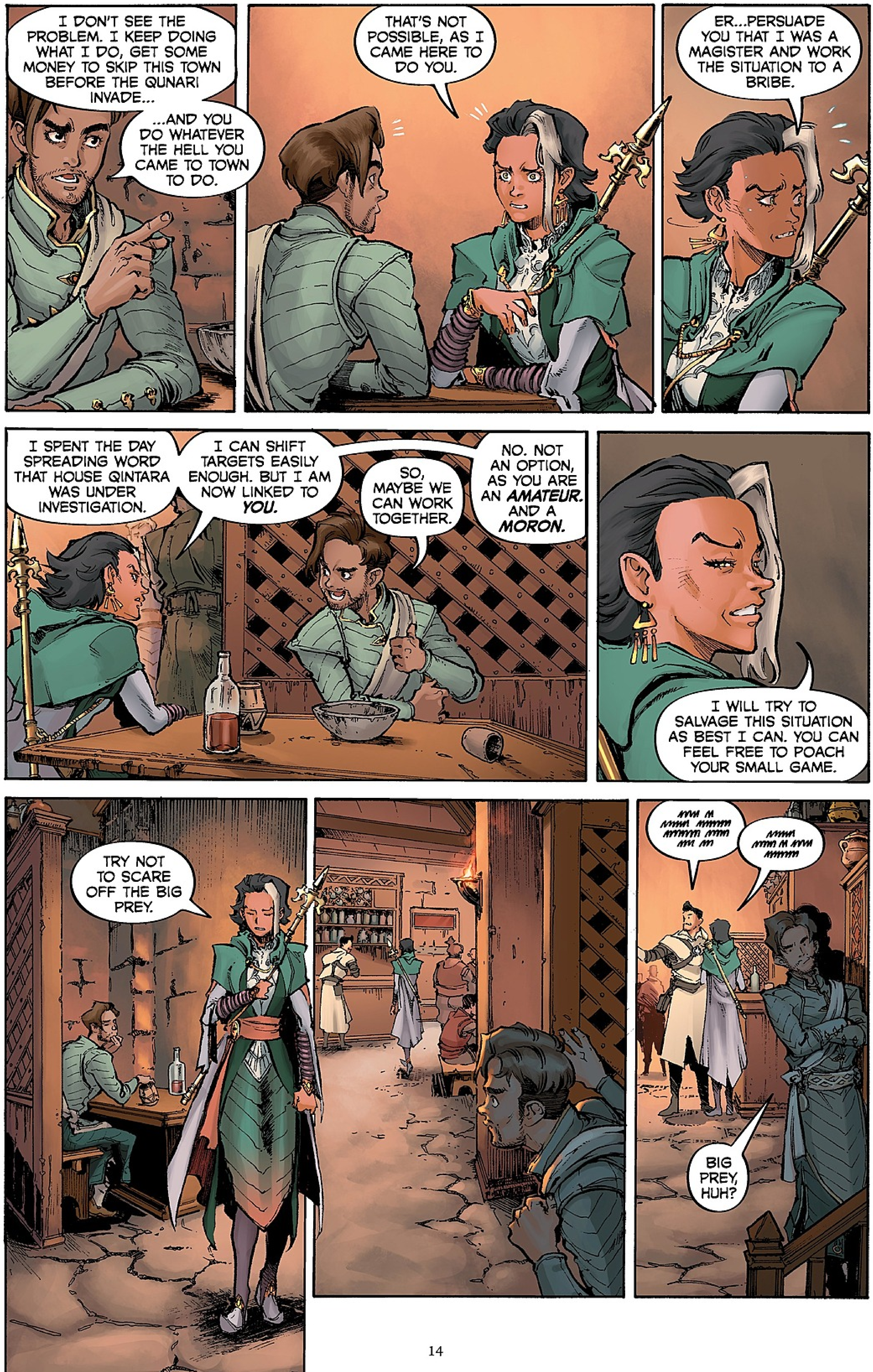

THERE'S A MAGISTER IN VENTUS NAMED QINTARA.
HE HASN'T BEEN SEEN IN YEARS. BUT THEY SAY HE PRACTICES SOME DARK MAGICS.
HIS SON JUST EMERGED FROM THE FAMILY ESTATE.
YOUNG THING, LOCKED IN THAT ESTATE FOR SO LONG?
HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE'LL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH A MAGISTER LOOKING INTO RUMORS THAT HIS FAMILY WAS VENATORI, COLLABORATING WITH THE ELDER ONE TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.
THE ROOKIE PLAY WOULD BE TO HEAD STRAIGHT INTO A MEETING WITH THE YOUNG MAN.
BUT WHEN PLAYING A ROLE LIKE THIS, YOU WANT THE REST OF THE WORLD TO SELL YOU IN THE PART.
LET A FEW OF VENTUS'S MOST INFLUENTIAL AND CHATTY RESIDENTS KNOW I'M HERE. HINT AT WHY.
BY THE TIME I APPROACH THE YOUNG MAN, HE'LL BE TERRIFIED.

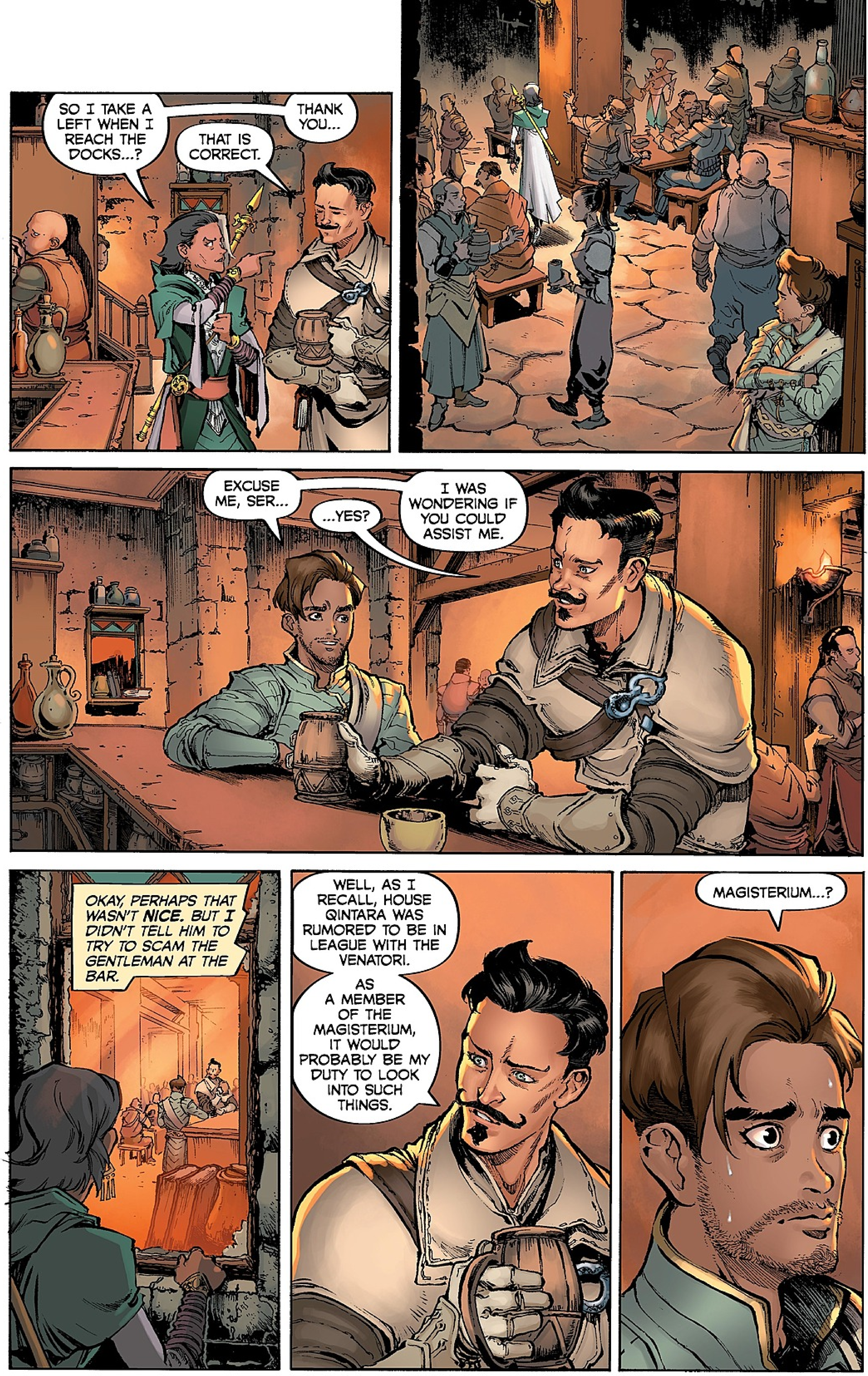

THIS ONE'S NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH. HE SEEMS THE KIND OF MAN WHO WOULD SEE THROUGH ME IN AN INSTANT.
DON'T YOU HAVE A MAN FROM TEVINTER WHO CAN HANDLE THIS SORT OF THING?
ADDITIONALLY, IT IS A GOOD RULE IN THIS LINE OF WORK TO NEVER DEAL WITH ANYONE WHO HAS MORE SECRETS THAN YOU DO.
HE'S A WANTED MAN. WE CAN'T TAKE THAT RISK.
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME. THIS WHOLE TOWN IS.
ALTHOUGH, NOW I'M CURIOUS. WHICH IS ALSO SOMETHING TO AVOID.
MUCH LIKE RUNNING INTO FORMER MARKS.

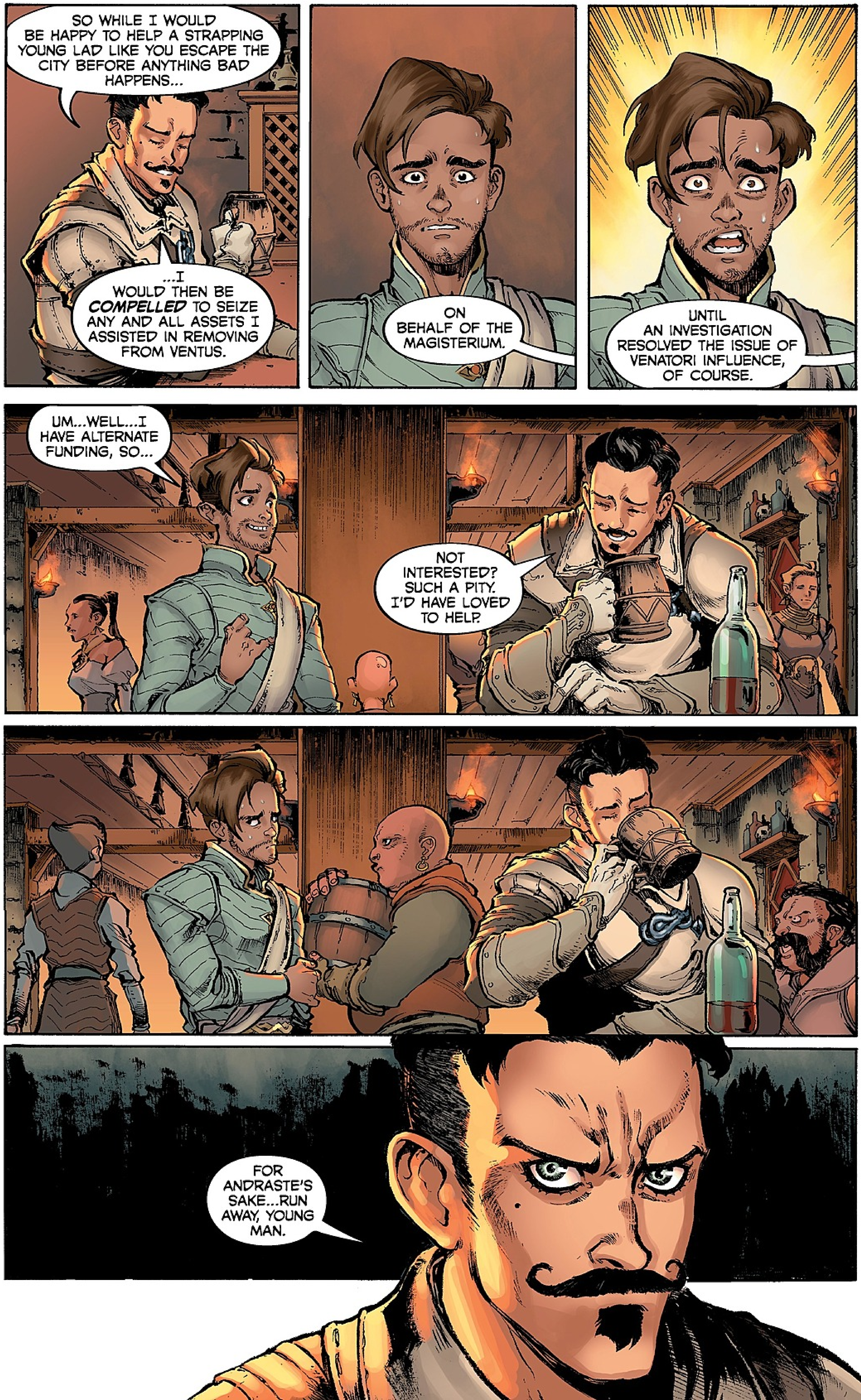

OR GETTING YOUR FEELINGS MIXED UP IN YOUR BUSINESS.
HE SHOULD NOT BE HERE. HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE IN FERELDEN.
I SHOULD JUST LEAVE...

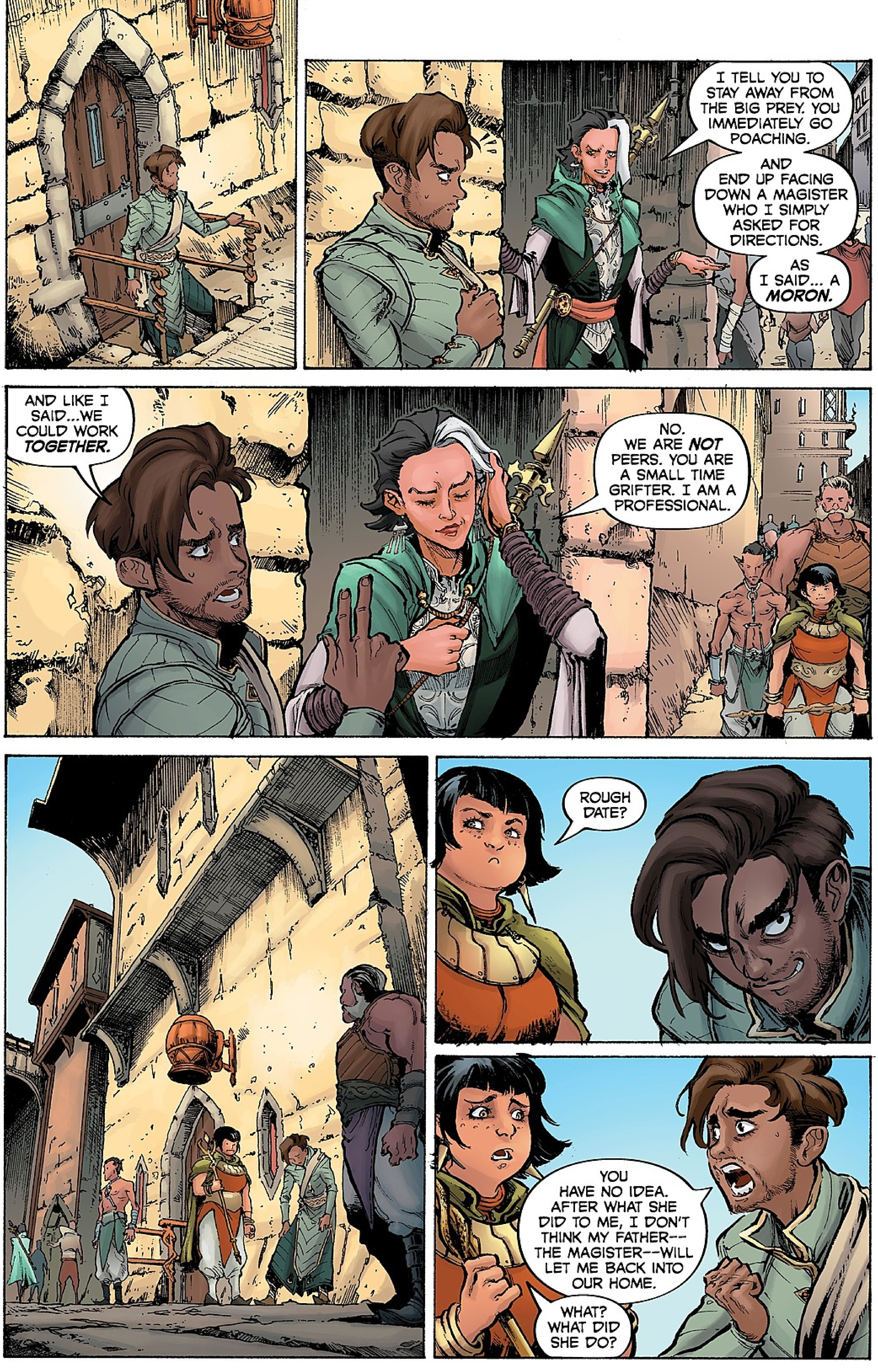

...OR PERHAPS I'LL JUST WORK QUICKLY.
PARDON ME. ARE YOU CALIX QINTARA?
I AM. AND YOU ARE...?
MAGISTER ARAMIS.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF ME?
OF COURSE. YOUR MERCY IS KNOWN ACROSS ALL OF TEVINTER.
MY... MERCY?
PLEASE, DEAR MAGISTER. WE ALL KNOW THAT VENTUS IS SOON TO FALL. AND MY FATHER, HE IS ILL.
OUR FAMILY'S HOLDINGS, OUR LIBRARY, EVERYTHING OF VALUE...WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET IT OUT OF THE CITY BEFORE THE QUNARI ATTACK.
IF SOMEONE OF YOUR MERCY AND GENEROSITY WOULD ASSIST IN TRANSPORTING THESE ITEMS, THEN WHEN WE REACH SAFETY--
...YOU'LL LIQUIDATE THE HOLDINGS AND REPAY ME A HUNDRED-FOLD.

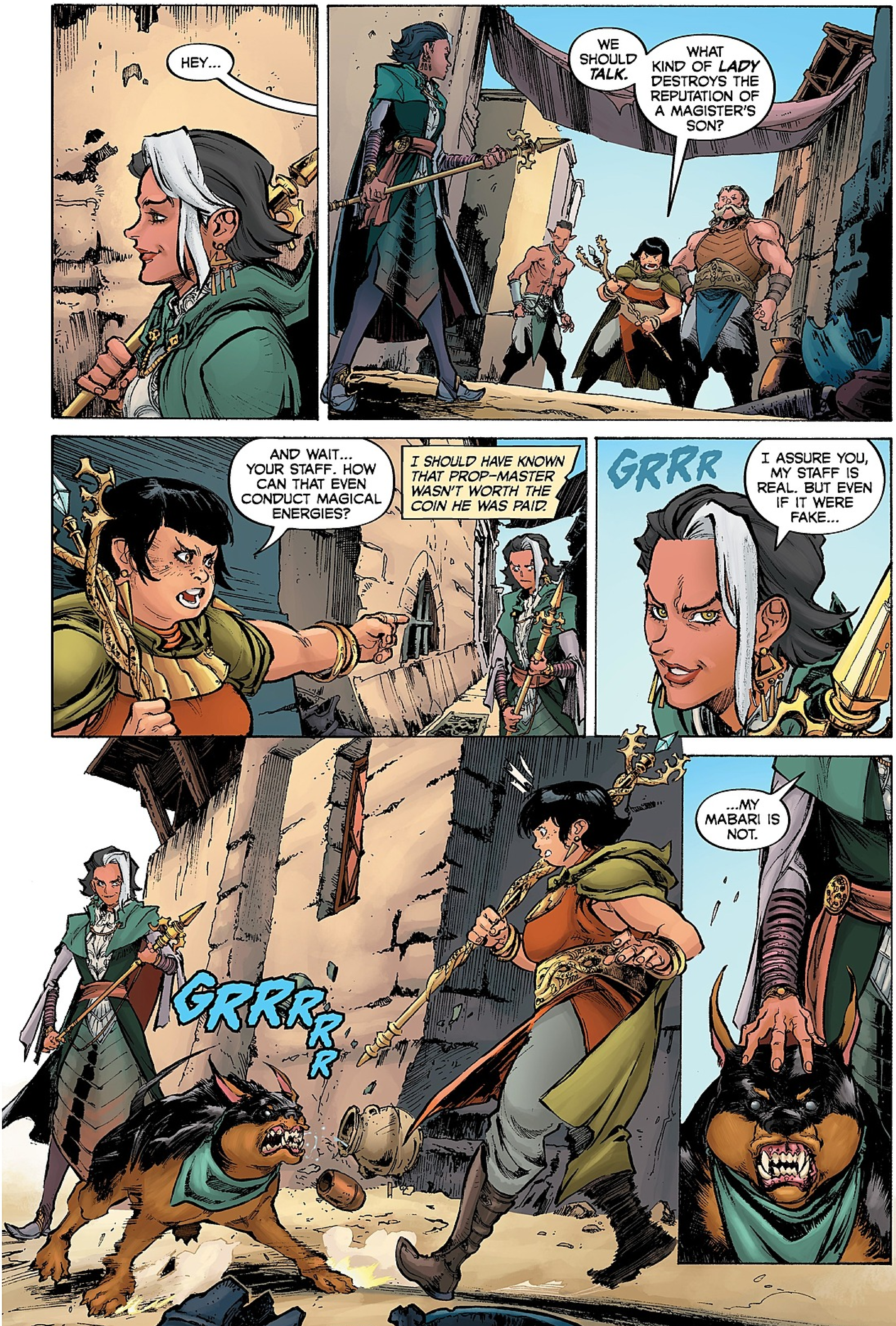

HEY!
CUT THE ACT, CHILD. YOU ARE *NO* QINTARA.
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
YOU ARE A CON ARTIST. A GRIFTER. I KNOW THE SCAM YOU'RE PLAYING. "THE CHASIND PRINCE," IT'S OFTEN CALLED.
BUT I AM NOT CHASIND.
YOU'RE NOT A SMART PERSON, ARE YOU?
THEN I SHALL BE BLUNT. YOU ARE, EITHER BY CHOICE OR HAPPENSTANCE, A LIAR WITH NO CONNECTION TO THE RECLUSIVE HOUSE OF QINTARA.
I KNOW NOTHING OF THIS CHASIND PRINCE. BUT IF YOU KNOW THAT CON BY NAME, THEN I SUSPECT *YOU* ARE NOT A MAGISTER.
LET'S JUST SKIP THE FANCY TALK, SISTER. NEITHER OF US AIN'T WHAT WE PRETEND TO BE.
YOU EXPOSE ME, I EXPOSE YOU.
THAT "FANCY TALK" IS NOT A ROLE I PLAY, YOUNG MAN. IT'S CALLED CLASS. CLEARLY, YOU HAVE NONE.
HOWEVER, YOU ARE NOT A COMPLETE IMBECILE. SO WE APPEAR TO BE AT A STALEMATE.

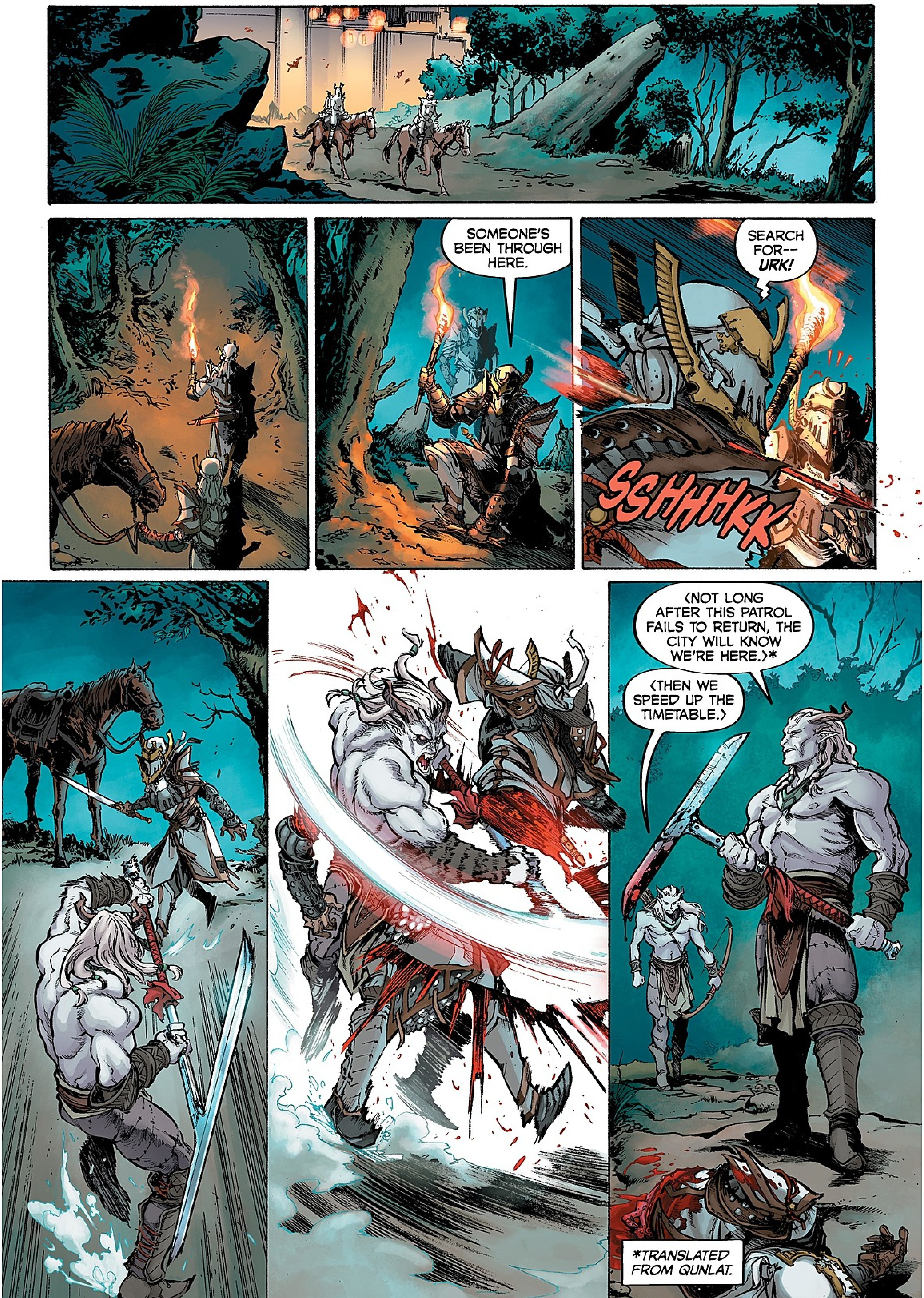

I DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM. I KEEP DOING WHAT I DO, GET SOME MONEY TO SKIP THIS TOWN BEFORE THE QUNARI INVADE...
...AND YOU DO WHATEVER THE HELL YOU CAME TO TOWN TO DO.
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, AS I CAME HERE TO DO YOU.
ER...PERSUADE YOU THAT I WAS A MAGISTER AND WORK THE SITUATION TO A BRIBE.
I SPENT THE DAY SPREADING WORD THAT HOUSE QINTARA WAS UNDER INVESTIGATION.
I CAN SHIFT TARGETS EASILY ENOUGH. BUT I AM NOW LINKED TO *YOU.*
SO, MAYBE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER.
NO. NOT AN OPTION, AS YOU ARE AN *AMATEUR.* AND A *MORON.*
I WILL TRY TO SALVAGE THIS SITUATION AS BEST I CAN. YOU CAN FEEL FREE TO POACH YOUR SMALL GAME.
TRY NOT TO SCARE OFF THE BIG PREY.
BIG PREY, HUH?

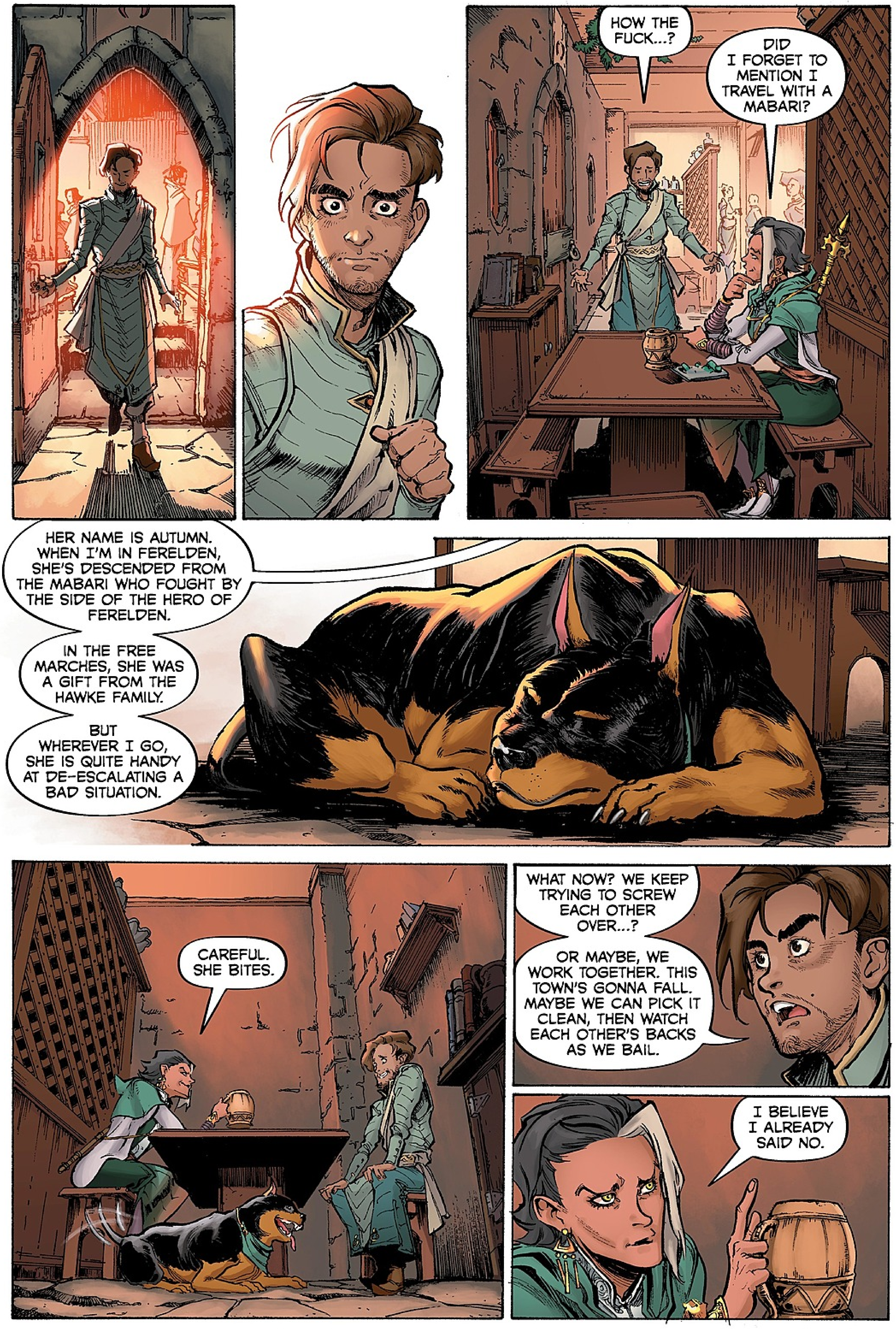

SO I TAKE A LEFT WHEN I REACH THE DOCKS...?
THAT IS CORRECT.
THANK YOU...
EXCUSE ME, SER...
...YES?
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD ASSIST ME.
OKAY, PERHAPS THAT WASN'T **NICE.** BUT **I** DIDN'T TELL HIM TO TRY TO SCAM THE GENTLEMAN AT THE BAR.
WELL, AS I RECALL, HOUSE QINTARA WAS RUMORED TO BE IN LEAGUE WITH THE VENATORI.
AS A MEMBER OF THE MAGISTERIUM, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE MY DUTY TO LOOK INTO SUCH THINGS.
MAGISTERIUM...?

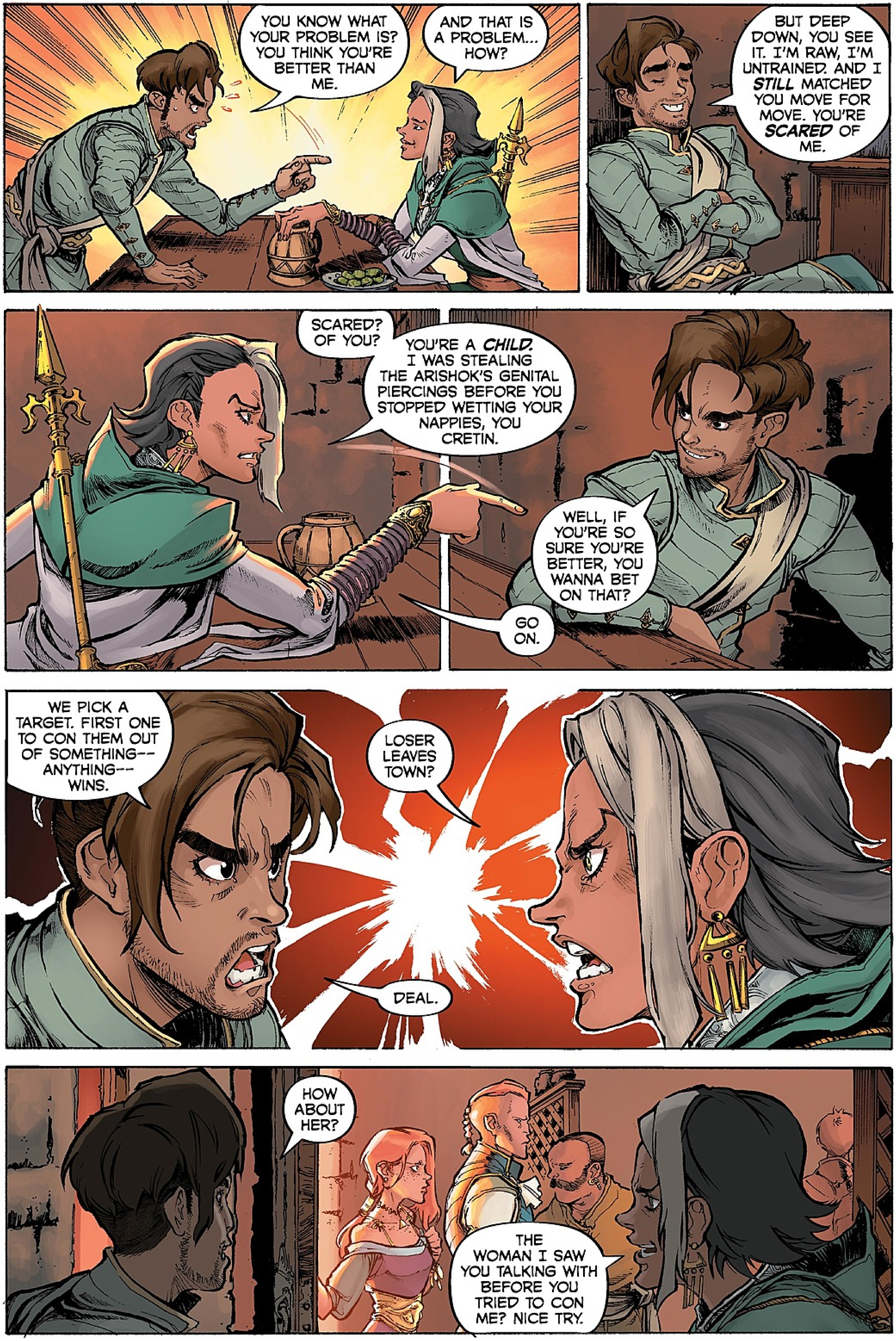

SO WHILE I WOULD BE HAPPY TO HELP A STRAPPING YOUNG LAD LIKE YOU ESCAPE THE CITY BEFORE ANYTHING BAD HAPPENS...
...I WOULD THEN BE *COMPELLED* TO SEIZE ANY AND ALL ASSETS I ASSISTED IN REMOVING FROM VENTUS.
ON BEHALF OF THE MAGISTERIUM.
UNTIL AN INVESTIGATION RESOLVED THE ISSUE OF VENATORI INFLUENCE, OF COURSE.
UM...WELL...I HAVE ALTERNATE FUNDING, SO...
NOT INTERESTED? SUCH A PITY. I'D HAVE LOVED TO HELP.
FOR ANDRASTE'S SAKE...RUN AWAY, YOUNG MAN.

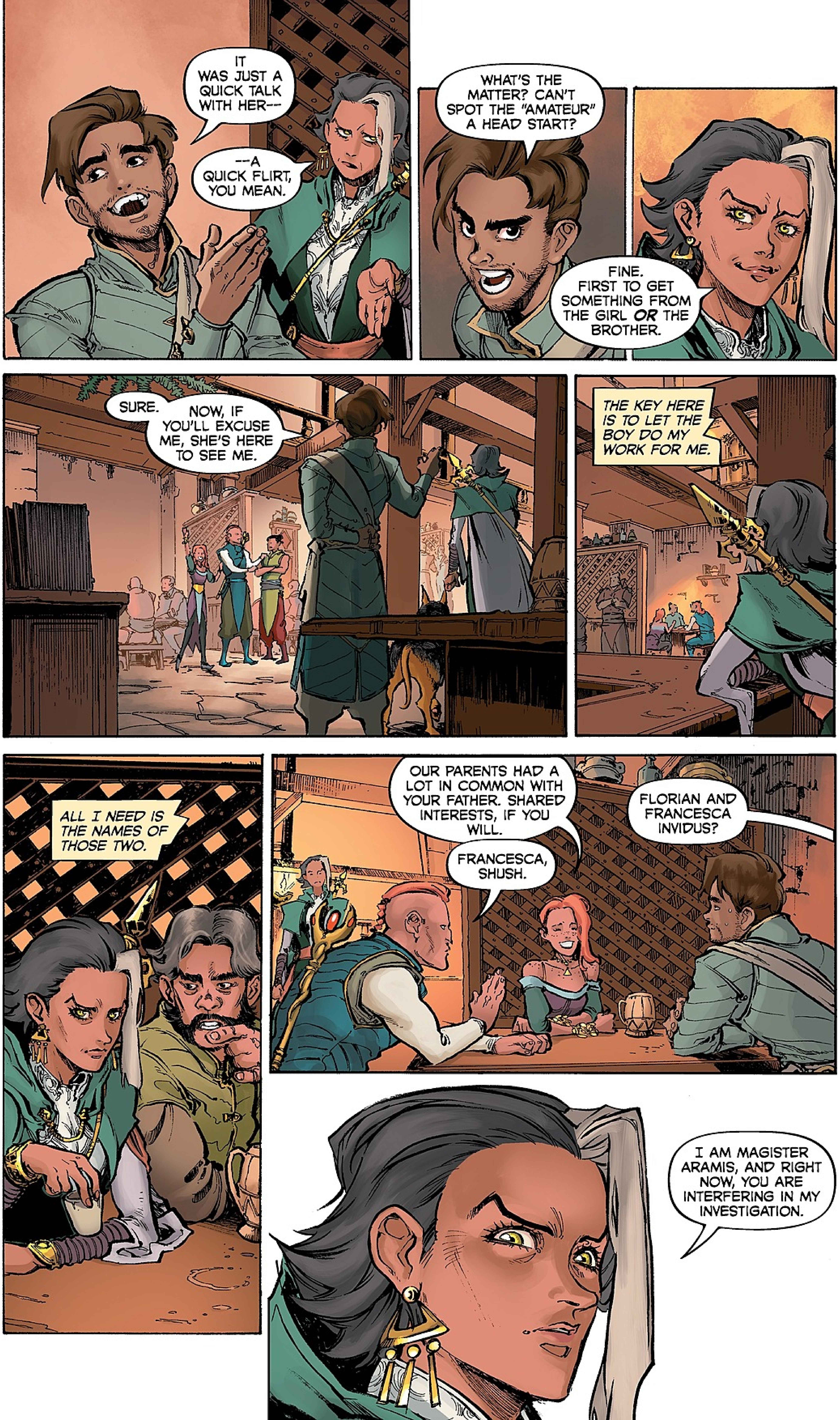

I TELL YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THE BIG PREY. YOU IMMEDIATELY GO POACHING.
AND END UP FACING DOWN A MAGISTER WHO I SIMPLY ASKED FOR DIRECTIONS.
AS I SAID... A ***MORON.***
AND LIKE I SAID...WE COULD WORK ***TOGETHER.***
NO. WE ARE ***NOT*** PEERS. YOU ARE A SMALL TIME GRIFTER. I AM A PROFESSIONAL.
ROUGH DATE?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA. AFTER WHAT SHE DID TO ME, I DON'T THINK MY FATHER-- THE MAGISTER--WILL LET ME BACK INTO OUR HOME.
WHAT? WHAT DID SHE DO?

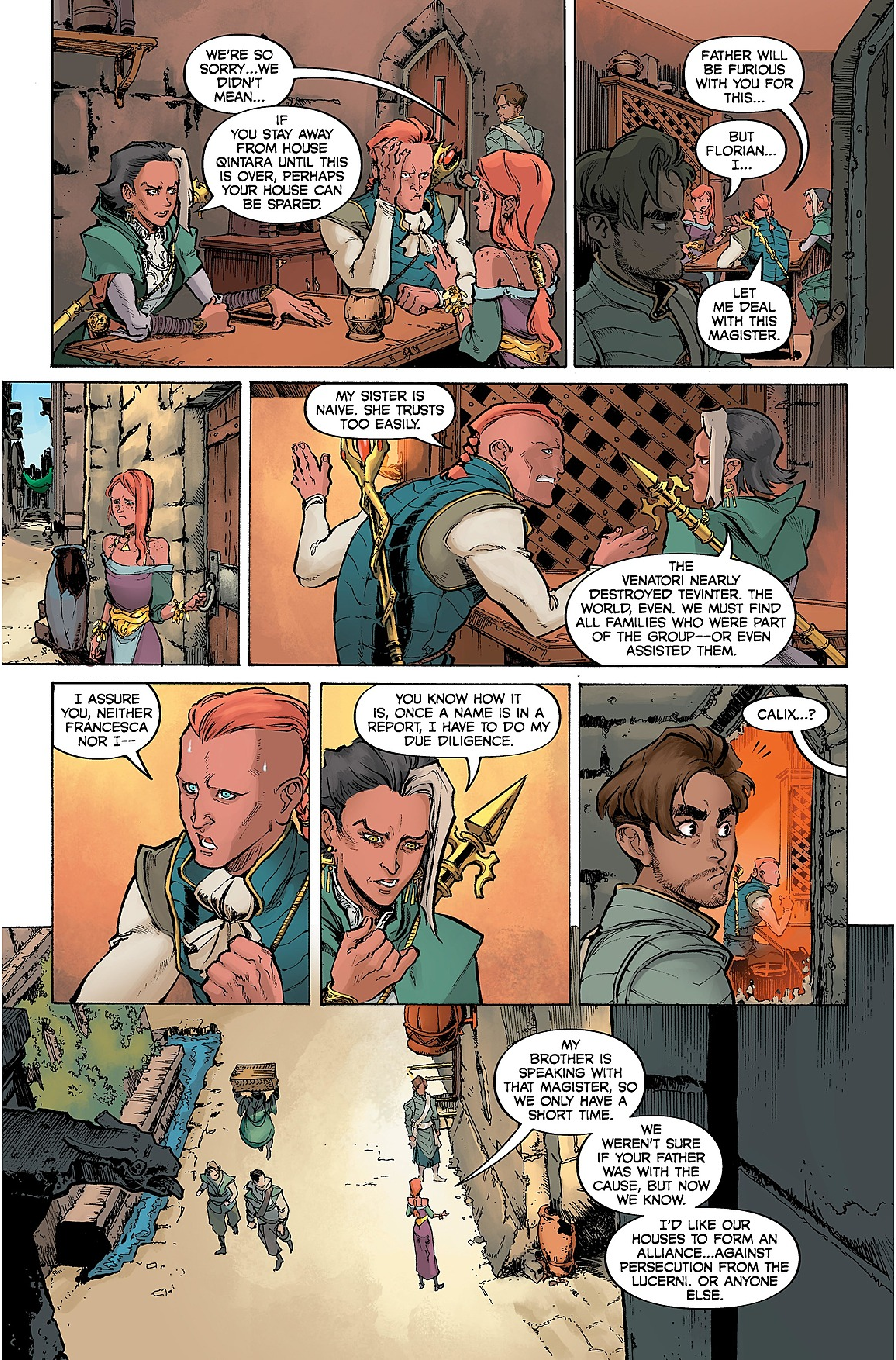

HEY...
WE SHOULD *TALK.*
WHAT KIND OF *LADY* DESTROYS THE REPUTATION OF A MAGISTER'S SON?
AND WAIT... YOUR STAFF. HOW CAN THAT EVEN CONDUCT MAGICAL ENERGIES?
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT PROP-MASTER WASN'T WORTH THE COIN HE WAS PAID.
GRRR
I ASSURE YOU, MY STAFF IS REAL. BUT EVEN IF IT WERE FAKE...
GRRRRR
...MY MABARI IS NOT.

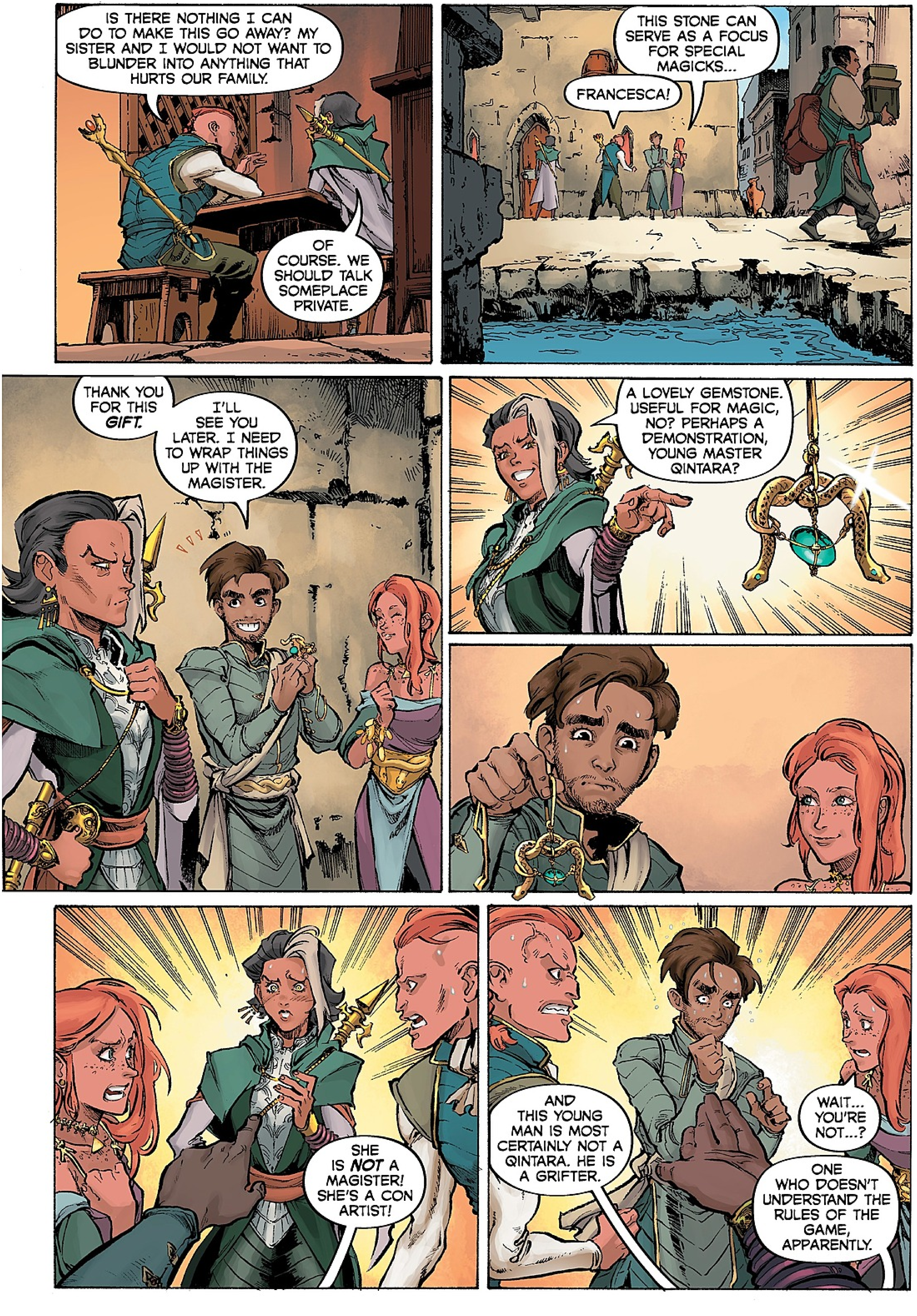

SOMEONE'S BEEN THROUGH HERE.
SEARCH FOR-- *URK!*
SSHHHKK
⟨NOT LONG AFTER THIS PATROL FAILS TO RETURN, THE CITY WILL KNOW WE'RE HERE.⟩*
⟨THEN WE SPEED UP THE TIMETABLE.⟩
*TRANSLATED FROM QUNLAT.

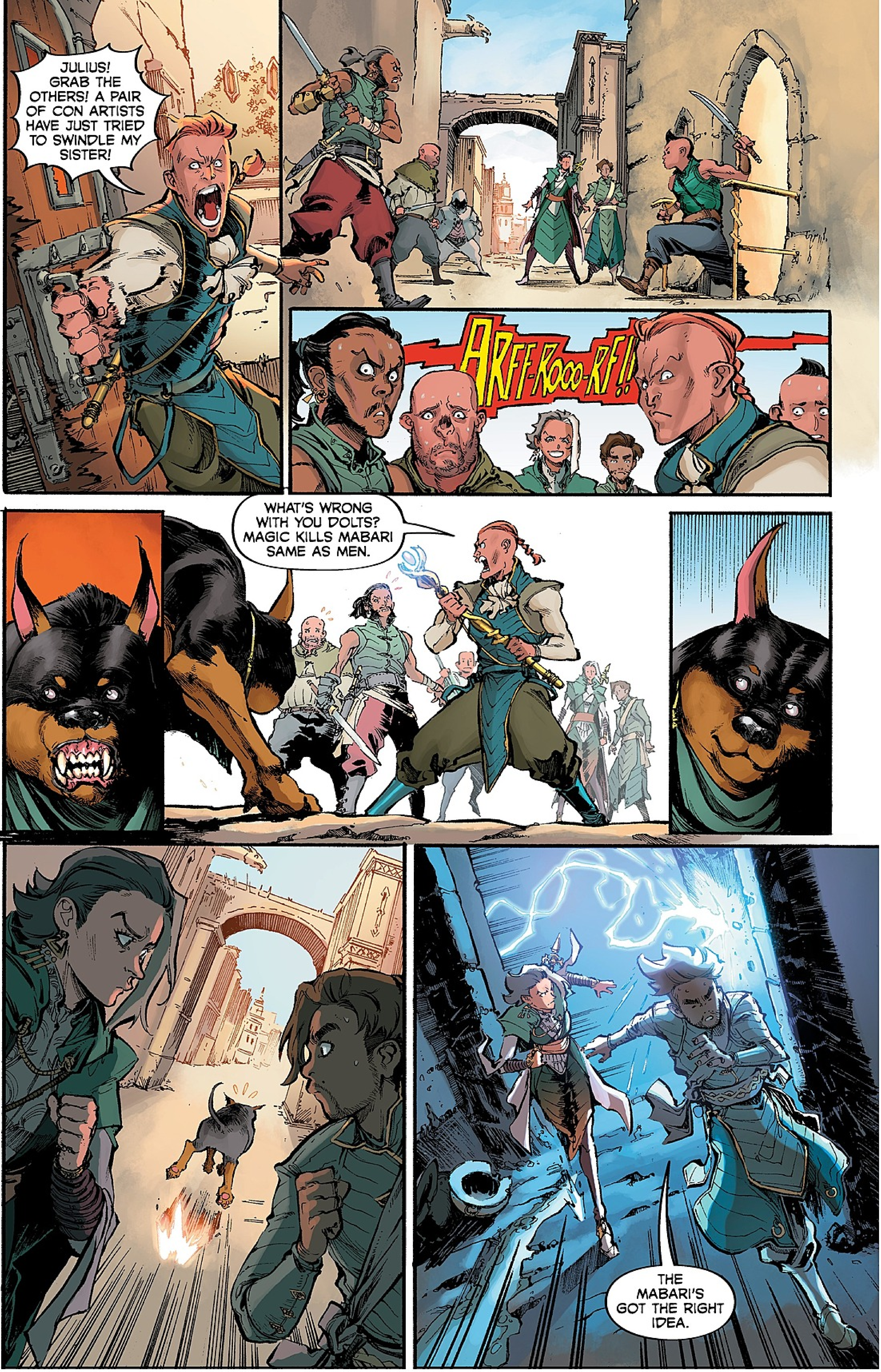

HOW THE FUCK...?
DID I FORGET TO MENTION I TRAVEL WITH A MABARI?
HER NAME IS AUTUMN. WHEN I'M IN FERELDEN, SHE'S DESCENDED FROM THE MABARI WHO FOUGHT BY THE SIDE OF THE HERO OF FERELDEN.
IN THE FREE MARCHES, SHE WAS A GIFT FROM THE HAWKE FAMILY.
BUT WHEREVER I GO, SHE IS QUITE HANDY AT DE-ESCALATING A BAD SITUATION.
CAREFUL. SHE BITES.
WHAT NOW? WE KEEP TRYING TO SCREW EACH OTHER OVER...?
OR MAYBE, WE WORK TOGETHER. THIS TOWN'S GONNA FALL. MAYBE WE CAN PICK IT CLEAN, THEN WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACKS AS WE BAIL.
I BELIEVE I ALREADY SAID NO.

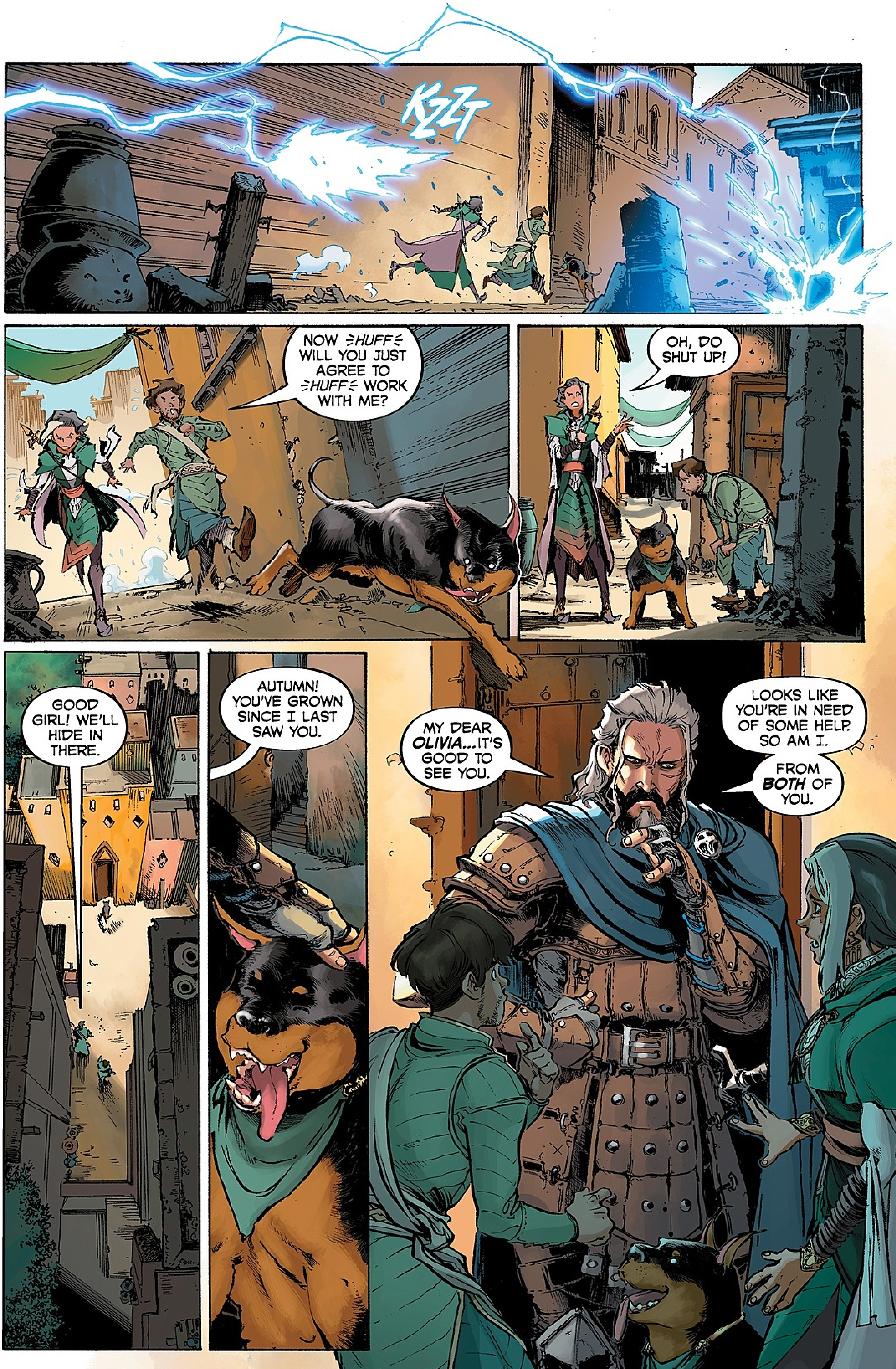

YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS? YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME.
AND THAT IS A PROBLEM... HOW?
BUT DEEP DOWN, YOU SEE IT. I'M RAW, I'M UNTRAINED. AND I *STILL* MATCHED YOU MOVE FOR MOVE. YOU'RE *SCARED* OF ME.
SCARED? OF YOU?
YOU'RE A *CHILD.* I WAS STEALING THE ARISHOK'S GENITAL PIERCINGS BEFORE YOU STOPPED WETTING YOUR NAPPIES, YOU CRETIN.
WELL, IF YOU'RE SO SURE YOU'RE BETTER, YOU WANNA BET ON THAT?
GO ON.
WE PICK A TARGET. FIRST ONE TO CON THEM OUT OF SOMETHING-- ANYTHING-- WINS.
LOSER LEAVES TOWN?
DEAL.
HOW ABOUT HER?
THE WOMAN I SAW YOU TALKING WITH BEFORE YOU TRIED TO CON ME? NICE TRY.

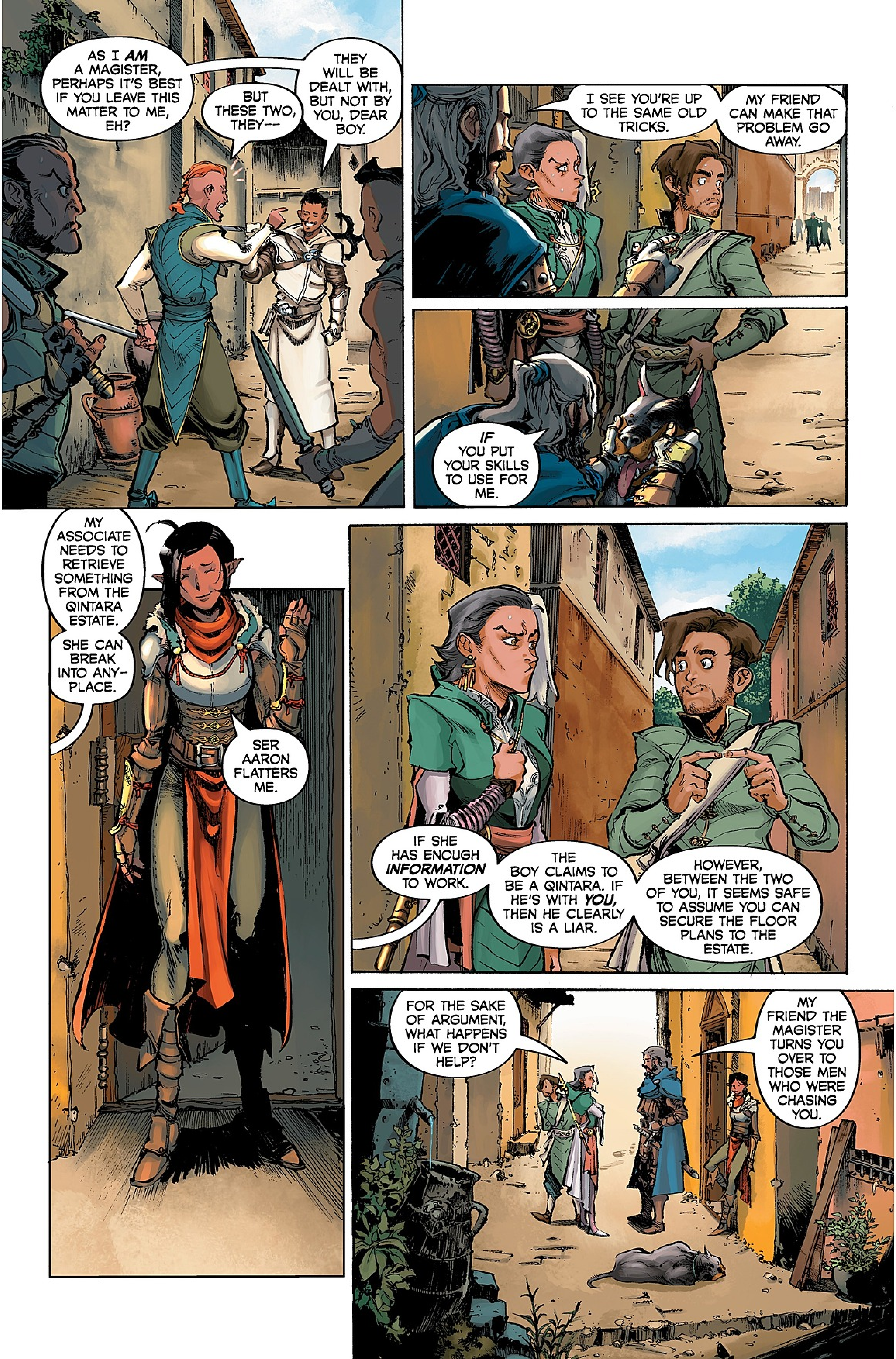

IT WAS JUST A QUICK TALK WITH HER--
--A QUICK FLIRT, YOU MEAN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? CAN'T SPOT THE "AMATEUR" A HEAD START?
FINE. FIRST TO GET SOMETHING FROM THE GIRL *OR* THE BROTHER.
SURE.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, SHE'S HERE TO SEE ME.
THE KEY HERE IS TO LET THE BOY DO MY WORK FOR ME.
ALL I NEED IS THE NAMES OF THOSE TWO.
OUR PARENTS HAD A LOT IN COMMON WITH YOUR FATHER. SHARED INTERESTS, IF YOU WILL.
FRANCESCA, SHUSH.
FLORIAN AND FRANCESCA INVIDUS?
I AM MAGISTER ARAMIS, AND RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE INTERFERING IN MY INVESTIGATION.

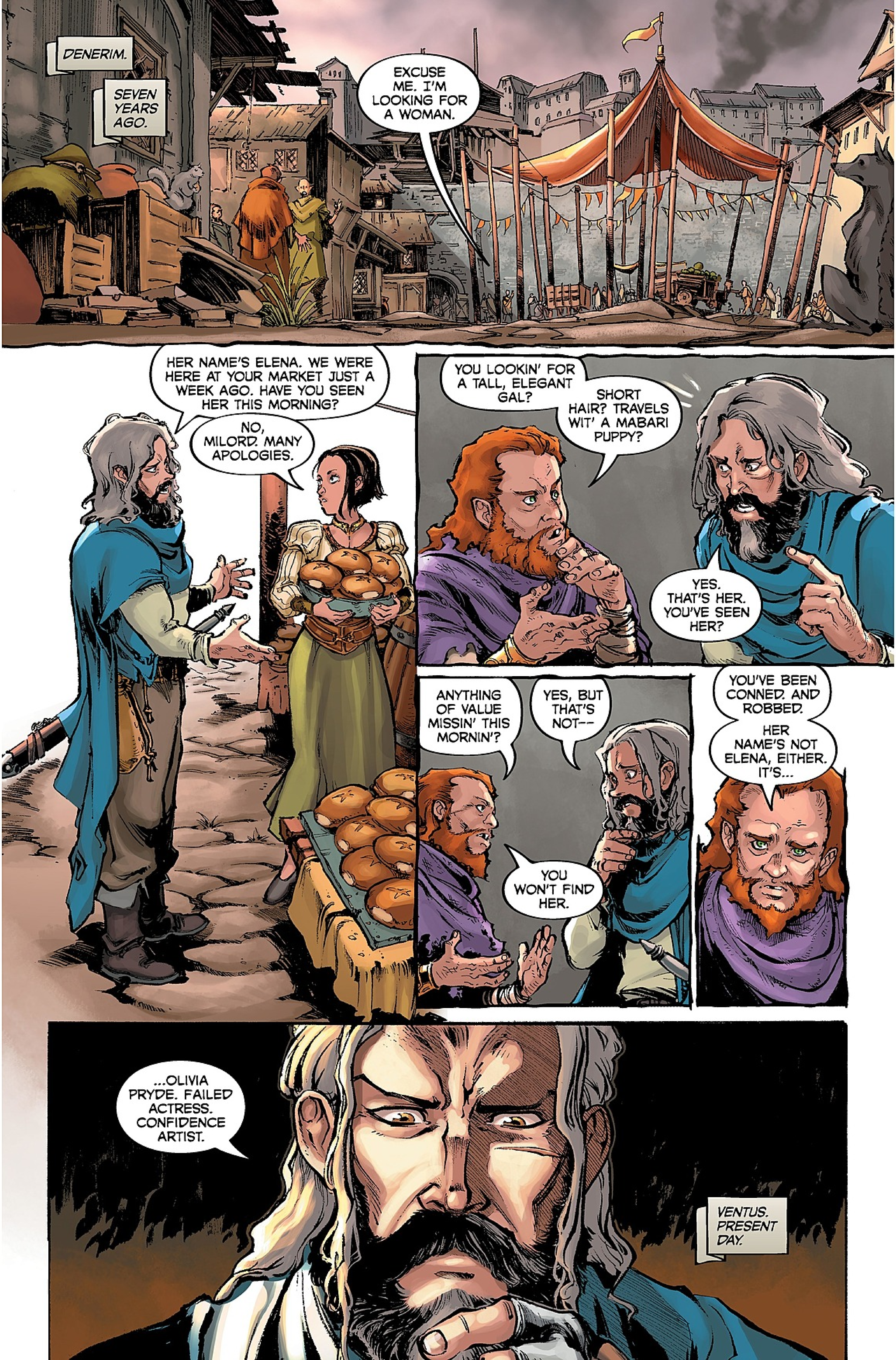

WE'RE SO SORRY...WE DIDN'T MEAN...
IF YOU STAY AWAY FROM HOUSE QINTARA UNTIL THIS IS OVER, PERHAPS YOUR HOUSE CAN BE SPARED.
FATHER WILL BE FURIOUS WITH YOU FOR THIS...
BUT FLORIAN... I...
LET ME DEAL WITH THIS MAGISTER.
MY SISTER IS NAIVE. SHE TRUSTS TOO EASILY.
THE VENATORI NEARLY DESTROYED TEVINTER. THE WORLD, EVEN. WE MUST FIND ALL FAMILIES WHO WERE PART OF THE GROUP--OR EVEN ASSISTED THEM.
I ASSURE YOU, NEITHER FRANCESCA NOR I--
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, ONCE A NAME IS IN A REPORT, I HAVE TO DO MY DUE DILIGENCE.
CALIX...?
MY BROTHER IS SPEAKING WITH THAT MAGISTER, SO WE ONLY HAVE A SHORT TIME.
WE WEREN'T SURE IF YOUR FATHER WAS WITH THE CAUSE, BUT NOW WE KNOW.
I'D LIKE OUR HOUSES TO FORM AN ALLIANCE...AGAINST PERSECUTION FROM THE LUCERNI. OR ANYONE ELSE.

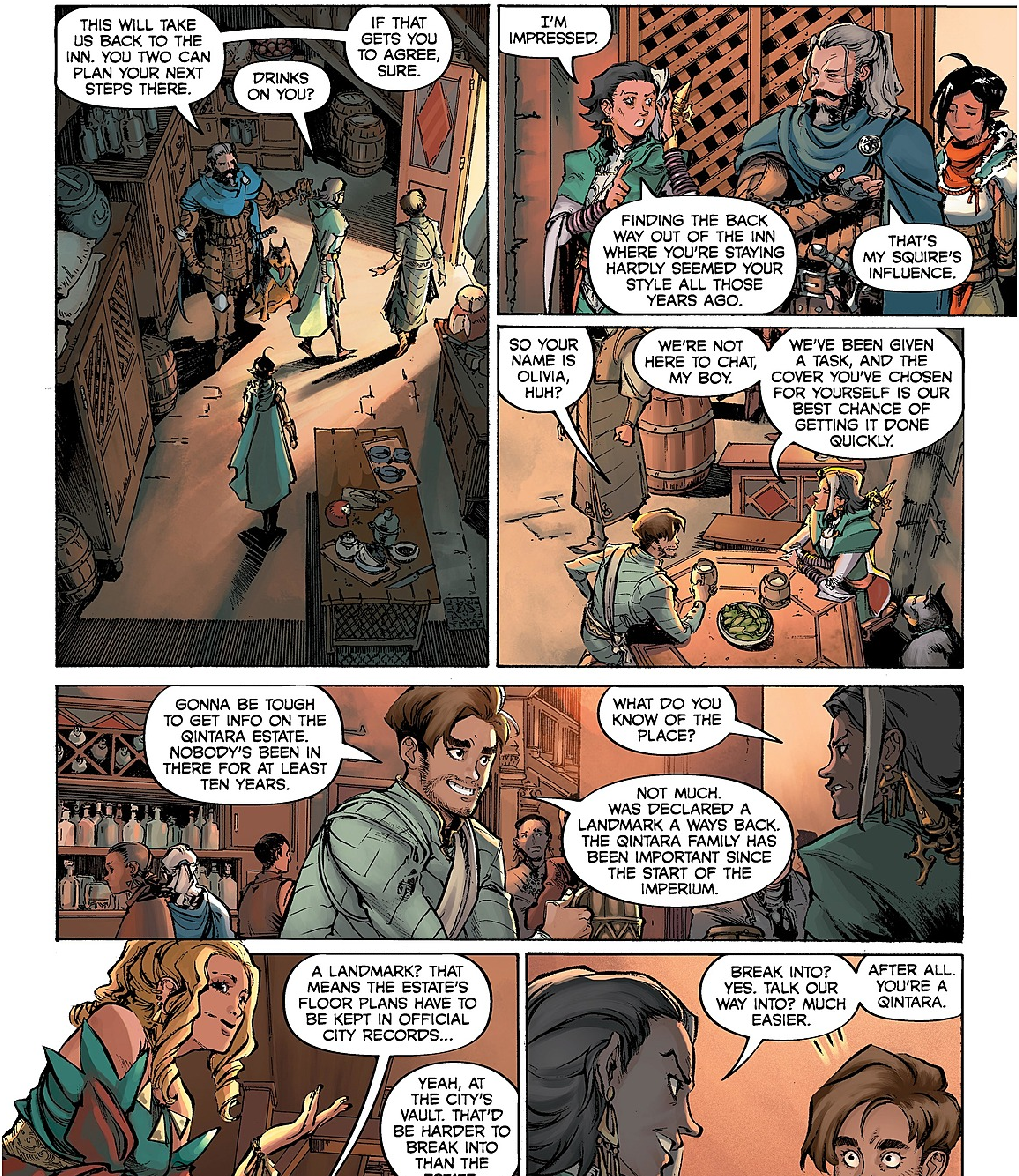

IS THERE NOTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE THIS GO AWAY? MY SISTER AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO BLUNDER INTO ANYTHING THAT HURTS OUR FAMILY.
OF COURSE. WE SHOULD TALK SOMEPLACE PRIVATE.
THIS STONE CAN SERVE AS A FOCUS FOR SPECIAL MAGICKS...
FRANCESCA!
THANK YOU FOR THIS *GIFT.*
I'LL SEE YOU LATER. I NEED TO WRAP THINGS UP WITH THE MAGISTER.
A LOVELY GEMSTONE. USEFUL FOR MAGIC, NO? PERHAPS A DEMONSTRATION, YOUNG MASTER QINTARA?
SHE IS *NOT* A MAGISTER! SHE'S A CON ARTIST!
AND THIS YOUNG MAN IS MOST CERTAINLY NOT A QINTARA. HE IS A GRIFTER.
WAIT... YOU'RE NOT...?
ONE WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE RULES OF THE GAME, APPARENTLY.

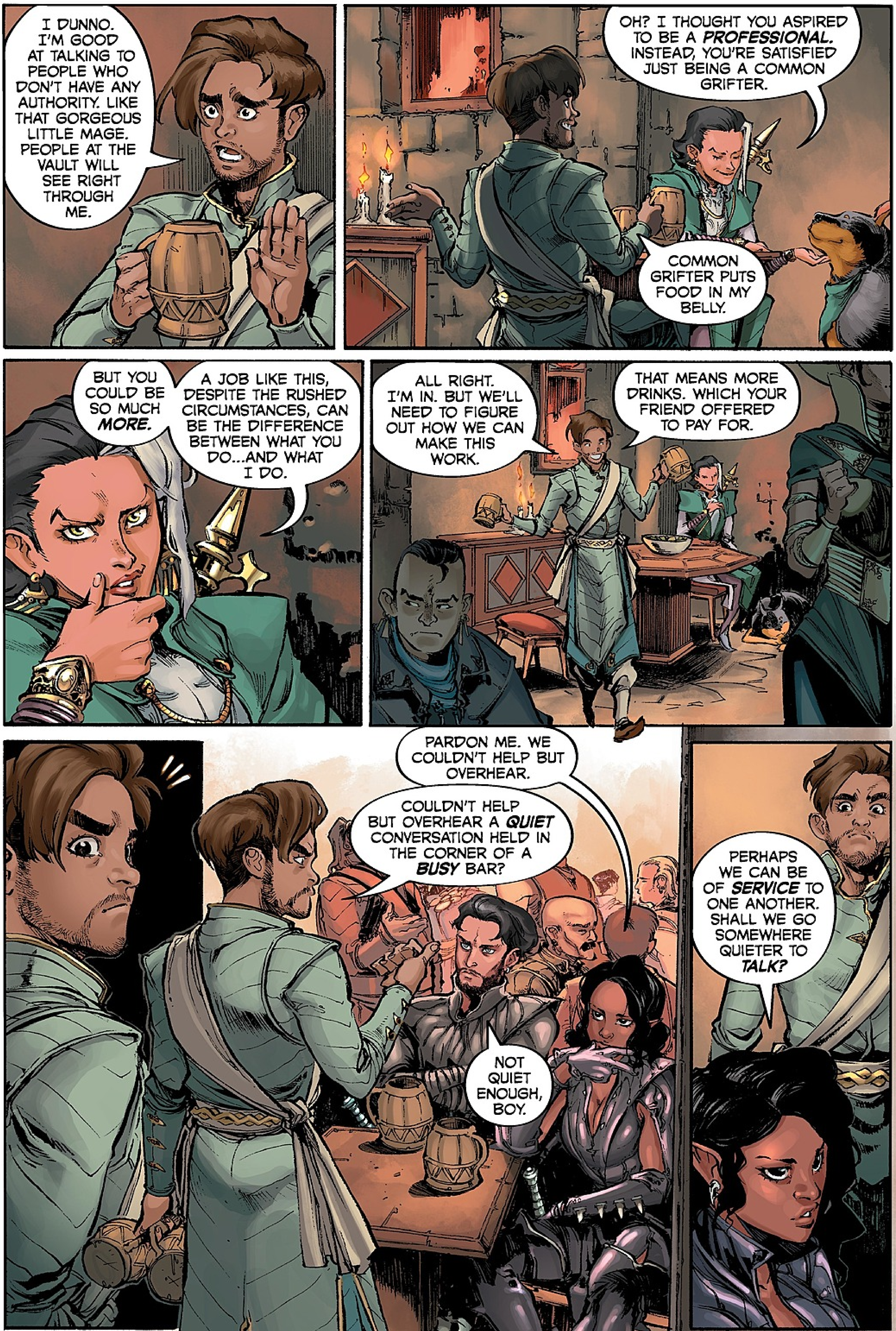

JULIUS! GRAB THE OTHERS! A PAIR OF CON ARTISTS HAVE JUST TRIED TO SWINDLE MY SISTER!
ARFF-ROOO-RF!!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU DOLTS? MAGIC KILLS MABARI SAME AS MEN.
THE MABARI'S GOT THE RIGHT IDEA.

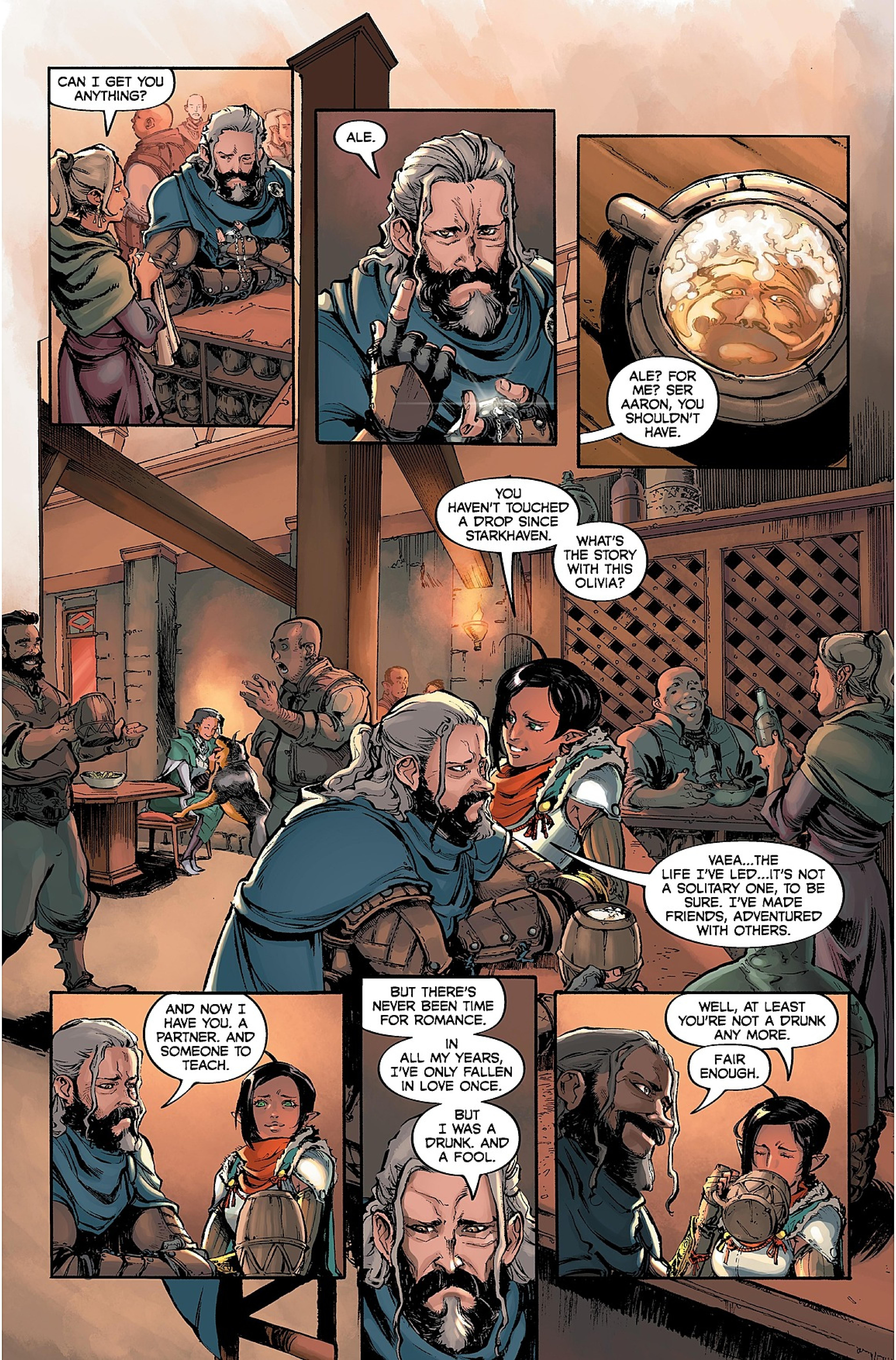

KZZT
NOW *HUFF* WILL YOU JUST AGREE TO *HUFF* WORK WITH ME?
OH, DO SHUT UP!
GOOD GIRL! WE'LL HIDE IN THERE.
AUTUMN! YOU'VE GROWN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU.
MY DEAR *OLIVIA*... IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN NEED OF SOME HELP. SO AM I.
FROM *BOTH* OF YOU.

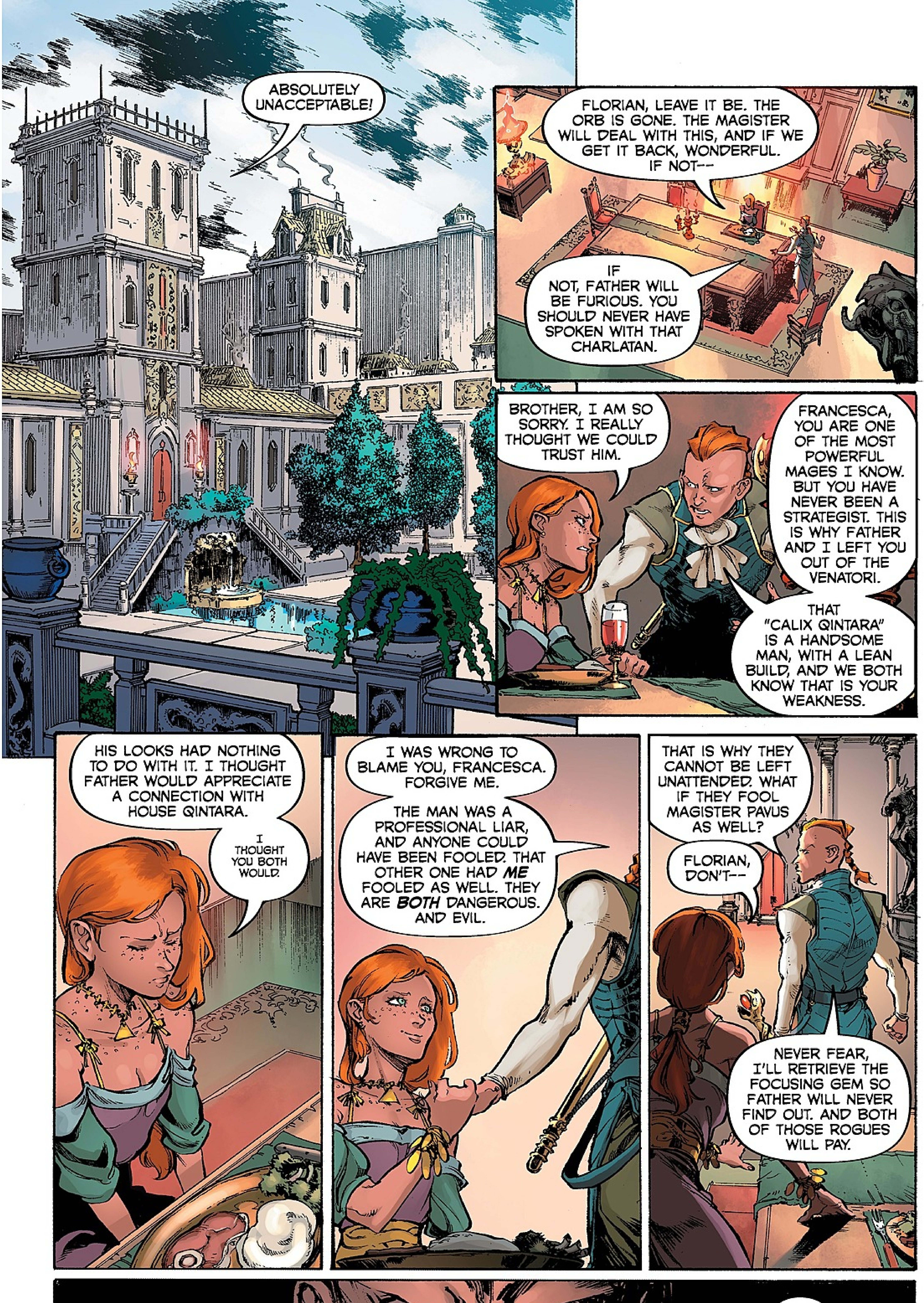

AS I *AM* A MAGISTER, PERHAPS IT'S BEST IF YOU LEAVE THIS MATTER TO ME, EH?
BUT THESE TWO, THEY--
THEY WILL BE DEALT WITH, BUT NOT BY YOU, DEAR BOY.
I SEE YOU'RE UP TO THE SAME OLD TRICKS.
MY FRIEND CAN MAKE THAT PROBLEM GO AWAY.
IF YOU PUT YOUR SKILLS TO USE FOR ME.
MY ASSOCIATE NEEDS TO RETRIEVE SOMETHING FROM THE QINTARA ESTATE.
SHE CAN BREAK INTO ANYPLACE.
SER AARON FLATTERS ME.
IF SHE HAS ENOUGH *INFORMATION* TO WORK.
THE BOY CLAIMS TO BE A QINTARA. IF HE'S WITH *YOU,* THEN HE CLEARLY IS A LIAR.
HOWEVER, BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU, IT SEEMS SAFE TO ASSUME YOU CAN SECURE THE FLOOR PLANS TO THE ESTATE.
FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T HELP?
MY FRIEND THE MAGISTER TURNS YOU OVER TO THOSE MEN WHO WERE CHASING YOU.

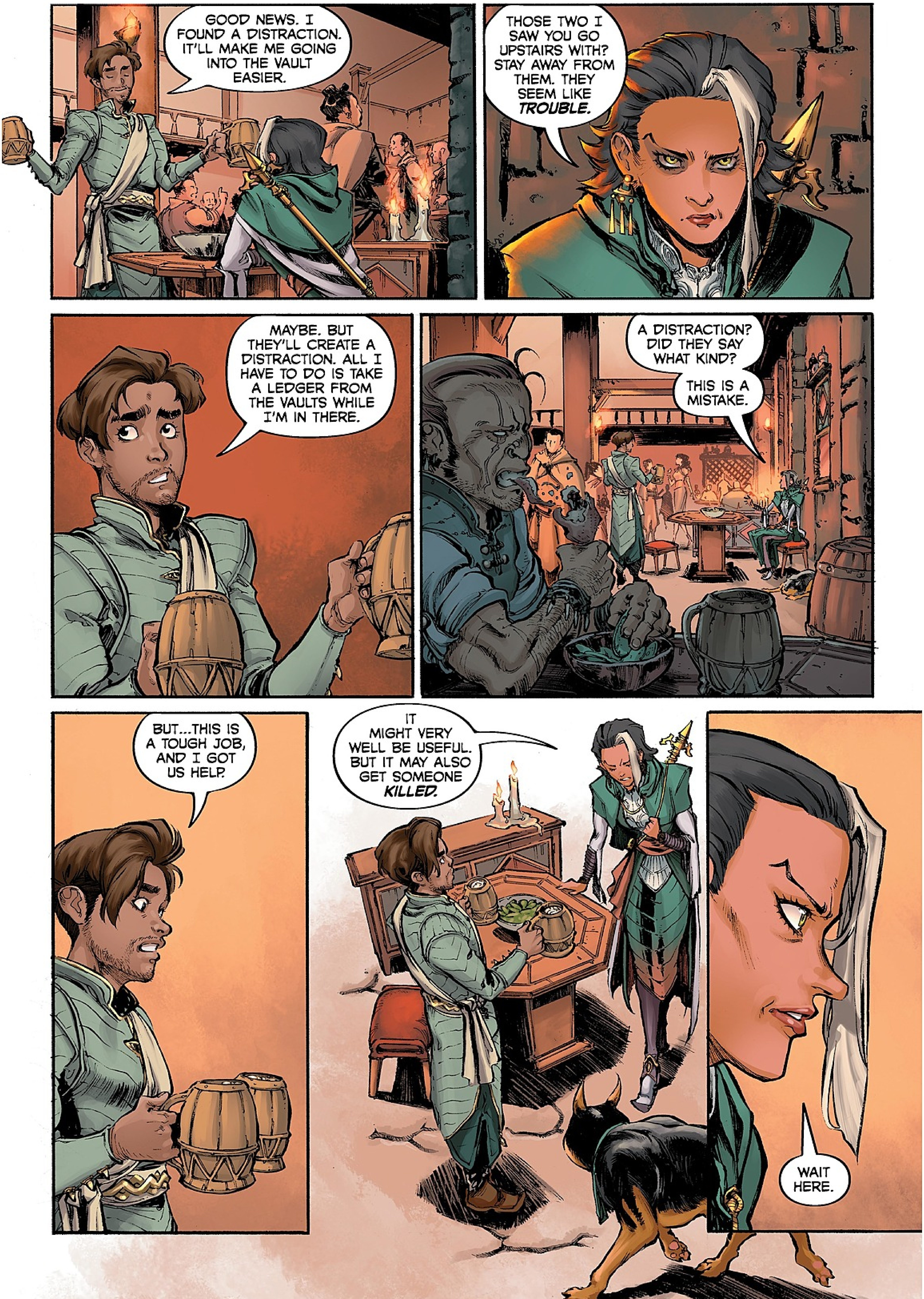

DENERIM.
SEVEN YEARS AGO.
EXCUSE ME. I'M LOOKING FOR A WOMAN.
HER NAME'S ELENA. WE WERE HERE AT YOUR MARKET JUST A WEEK AGO. HAVE YOU SEEN HER THIS MORNING?
NO, MILORD. MANY APOLOGIES.
YOU LOOKIN' FOR A TALL, ELEGANT GAL?
SHORT HAIR? TRAVELS WIT' A MABARI PUPPY?
YES. THAT'S HER. YOU'VE SEEN HER?
ANYTHING OF VALUE MISSIN' THIS MORNIN'?
YES, BUT THAT'S NOT--
YOU WON'T FIND HER.
YOU'VE BEEN CONNED. AND ROBBED.
HER NAME'S NOT ELENA, EITHER. IT'S...
...OLIVIA PRYDE. FAILED ACTRESS. CONFIDENCE ARTIST.
VENTUS. PRESENT DAY.

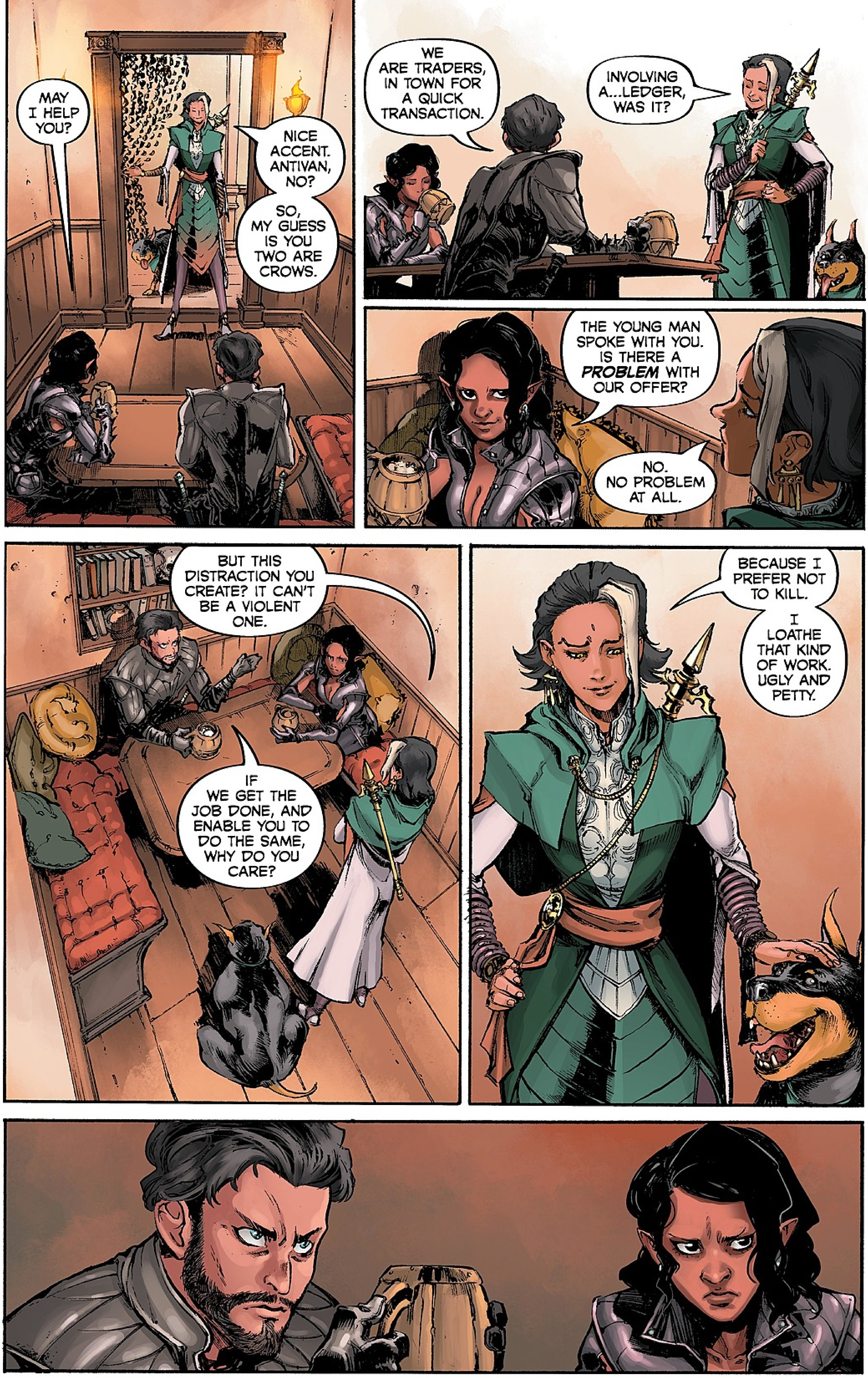

THIS WILL TAKE US BACK TO THE INN. YOU TWO CAN PLAN YOUR NEXT STEPS THERE.
DRINKS ON YOU?
IF THAT GETS YOU TO AGREE, SURE.
I'M IMPRESSED.
FINDING THE BACK WAY OUT OF THE INN WHERE YOU'RE STAYING HARDLY SEEMED YOUR STYLE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
THAT'S MY SQUIRE'S INFLUENCE.
SO YOUR NAME IS OLIVIA, HUH?
WE'RE NOT HERE TO CHAT, MY BOY.
WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A TASK, AND THE COVER YOU'VE CHOSEN FOR YOURSELF IS OUR BEST CHANCE OF GETTING IT DONE QUICKLY.
GONNA BE TOUGH TO GET INFO ON THE QINTARA ESTATE. NOBODY'S BEEN IN THERE FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE PLACE?
NOT MUCH. WAS DECLARED A LANDMARK A WAYS BACK. THE QINTARA FAMILY HAS BEEN IMPORTANT SINCE THE START OF THE IMPERIUM.
A LANDMARK? THAT MEANS THE ESTATE'S FLOOR PLANS HAVE TO BE KEPT IN OFFICIAL CITY RECORDS...
YEAH, AT THE CITY'S VAULT. THAT'D BE HARDER TO BREAK INTO THAN THE ESTATE.
BREAK INTO? YES. TALK OUR WAY INTO? MUCH EASIER.
AFTER ALL, YOU'RE A QINTARA.

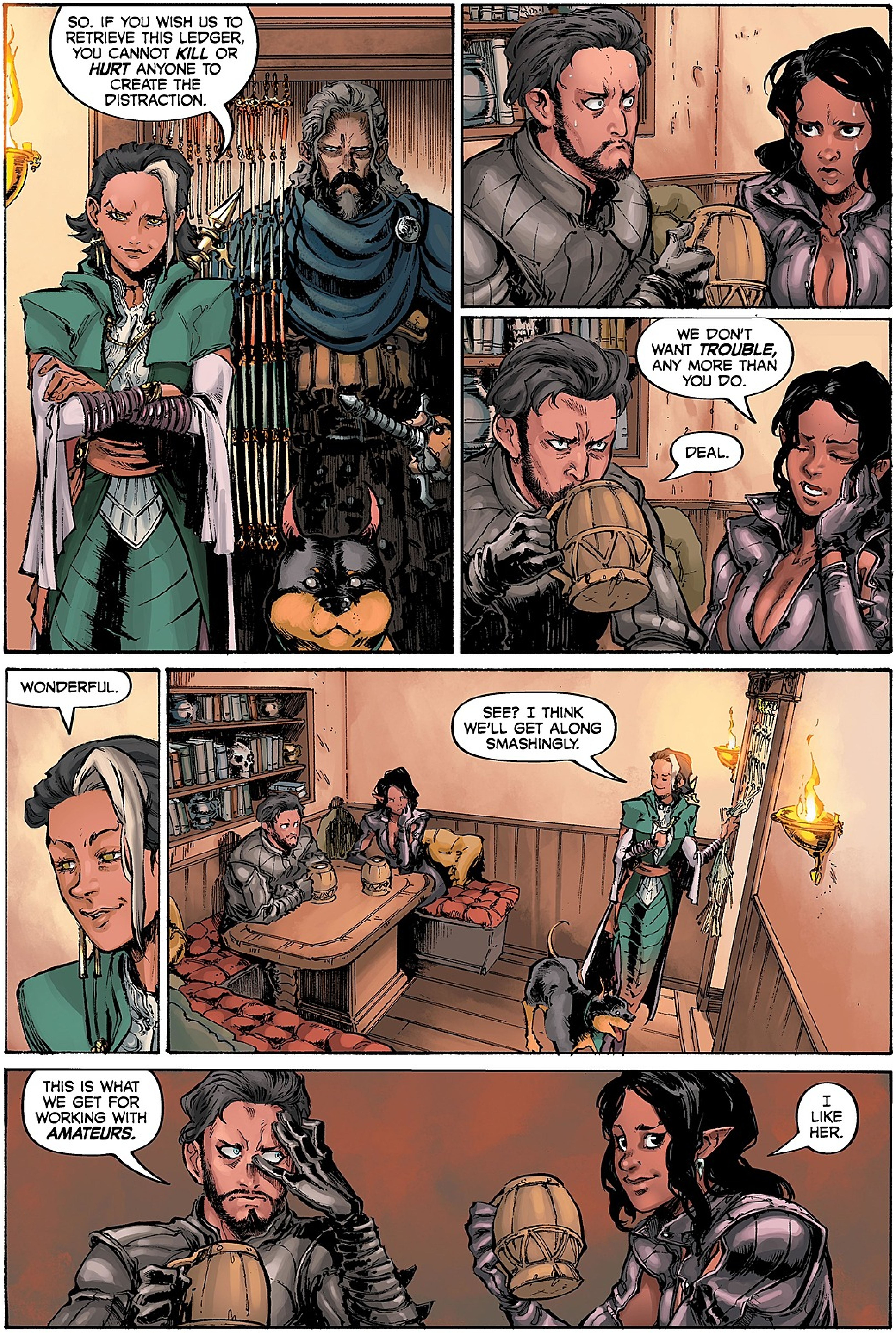

I DUNNO. I'M GOOD AT TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE ANY AUTHORITY. LIKE THAT GORGEOUS LITTLE MAGE. PEOPLE AT THE VAULT WILL SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME.
OH? I THOUGHT YOU ASPIRED TO BE A ***PROFESSIONAL.*** INSTEAD, YOU'RE SATISFIED JUST BEING A COMMON GRIFTER.
COMMON GRIFTER PUTS FOOD IN MY BELLY.
BUT YOU COULD BE SO MUCH ***MORE.***
A JOB LIKE THIS, DESPITE THE RUSHED CIRCUMSTANCES, CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT YOU DO...AND WHAT I DO.
ALL RIGHT. I'M IN. BUT WE'LL NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW WE CAN MAKE THIS WORK.
THAT MEANS MORE DRINKS. WHICH YOUR FRIEND OFFERED TO PAY FOR.
PARDON ME. WE COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR.
COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR A ***QUIET*** CONVERSATION HELD IN THE CORNER OF A ***BUSY*** BAR?
NOT QUIET ENOUGH, BOY.
PERHAPS WE CAN BE OF ***SERVICE*** TO ONE ANOTHER. SHALL WE GO SOMEWHERE QUIETER TO ***TALK?***

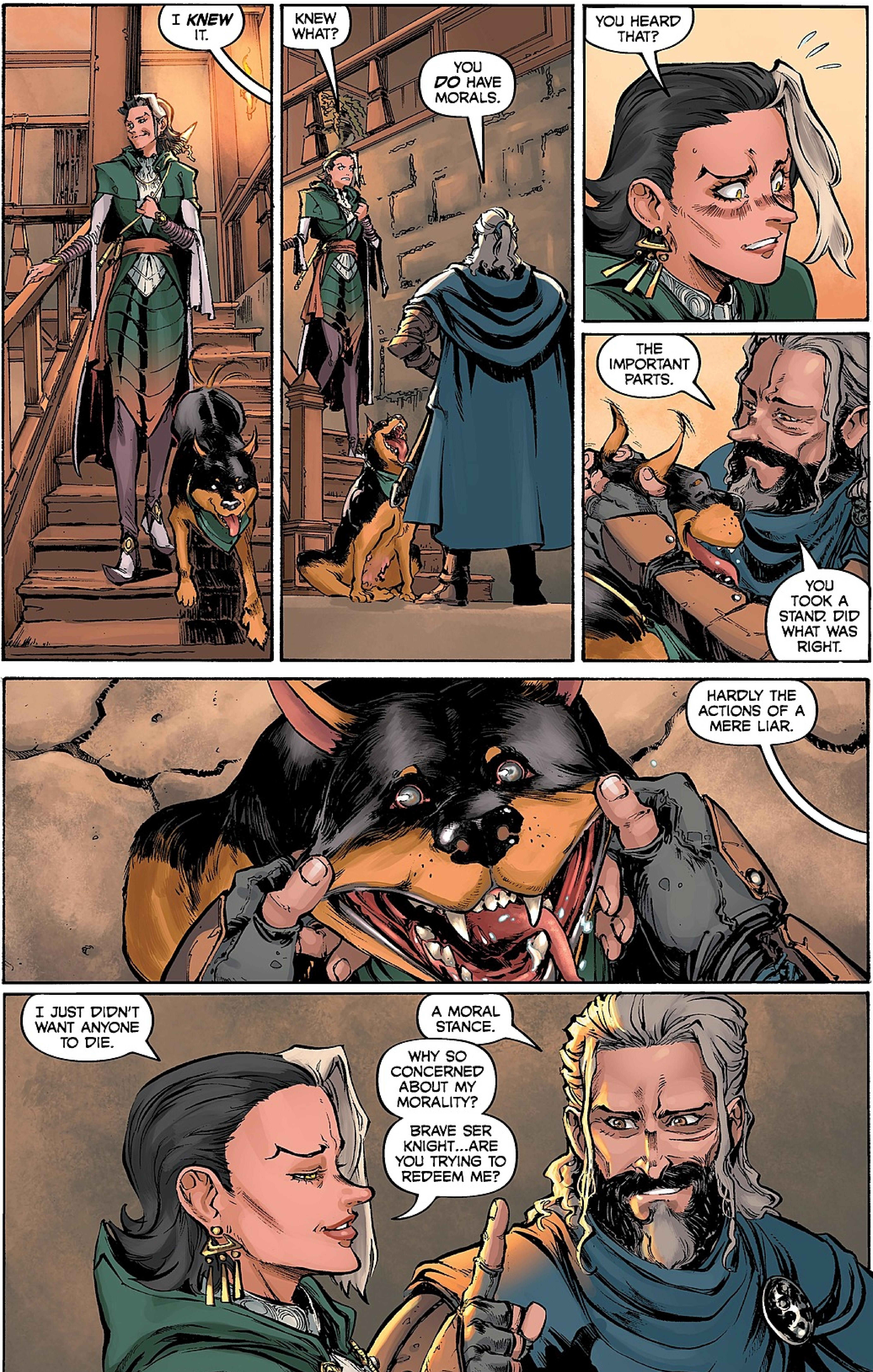

CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?
ALE.
ALE? FOR ME? SER AARON, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE.
YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED A DROP SINCE STARKHAVEN.
WHAT'S THE STORY WITH THIS OLIVIA?
VAEA...THE LIFE I'VE LED...IT'S NOT A SOLITARY ONE, TO BE SURE. I'VE MADE FRIENDS, ADVENTURED WITH OTHERS.
AND NOW I HAVE YOU. A PARTNER. AND SOMEONE TO TEACH.
BUT THERE'S NEVER BEEN TIME FOR ROMANCE.
IN ALL MY YEARS, I'VE ONLY FALLEN IN LOVE ONCE.
BUT I WAS A DRUNK. AND A FOOL.
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT A DRUNK ANY MORE.
FAIR ENOUGH.

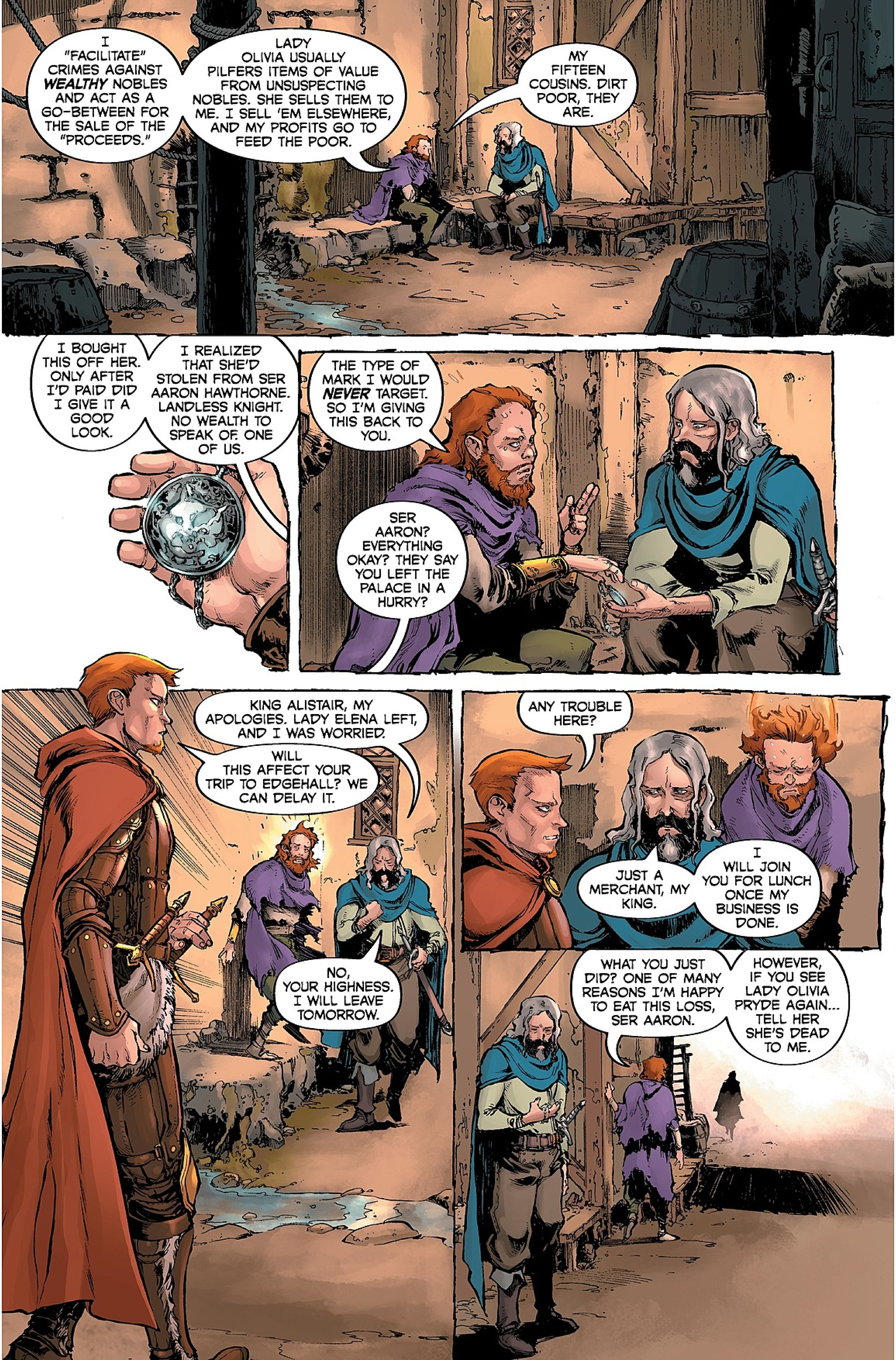

ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE!
FLORIAN, LEAVE IT BE. THE ORB IS GONE. THE MAGISTER WILL DEAL WITH THIS, AND IF WE GET IT BACK, WONDERFUL. IF NOT--
IF NOT, FATHER WILL BE FURIOUS. YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE SPOKEN WITH THAT CHARLATAN.
BROTHER, I AM SO SORRY. I REALLY THOUGHT WE COULD TRUST HIM.
FRANCESCA, YOU ARE ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MAGES I KNOW. BUT YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN A STRATEGIST. THIS IS WHY FATHER AND I LEFT YOU OUT OF THE VENATORI.
THAT "CALIX QINTARA" IS A HANDSOME MAN, WITH A LEAN BUILD, AND WE BOTH KNOW THAT IS YOUR WEAKNESS.
HIS LOOKS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. I THOUGHT FATHER WOULD APPRECIATE A CONNECTION WITH HOUSE QINTARA.
I THOUGHT YOU BOTH WOULD.
I WAS WRONG TO BLAME YOU, FRANCESCA. FORGIVE ME.
THE MAN WAS A PROFESSIONAL LIAR, AND ANYONE COULD HAVE BEEN FOOLED. THAT OTHER ONE HAD *ME* FOOLED AS WELL. THEY ARE *BOTH* DANGEROUS. AND EVIL.
THAT IS WHY THEY CANNOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED. WHAT IF THEY FOOL MAGISTER PAVUS AS WELL?
FLORIAN, DON'T--
NEVER FEAR, I'LL RETRIEVE THE FOCUSING GEM SO FATHER WILL NEVER FIND OUT. AND BOTH OF THOSE ROGUES WILL PAY.
WITH THEIR LIVES.

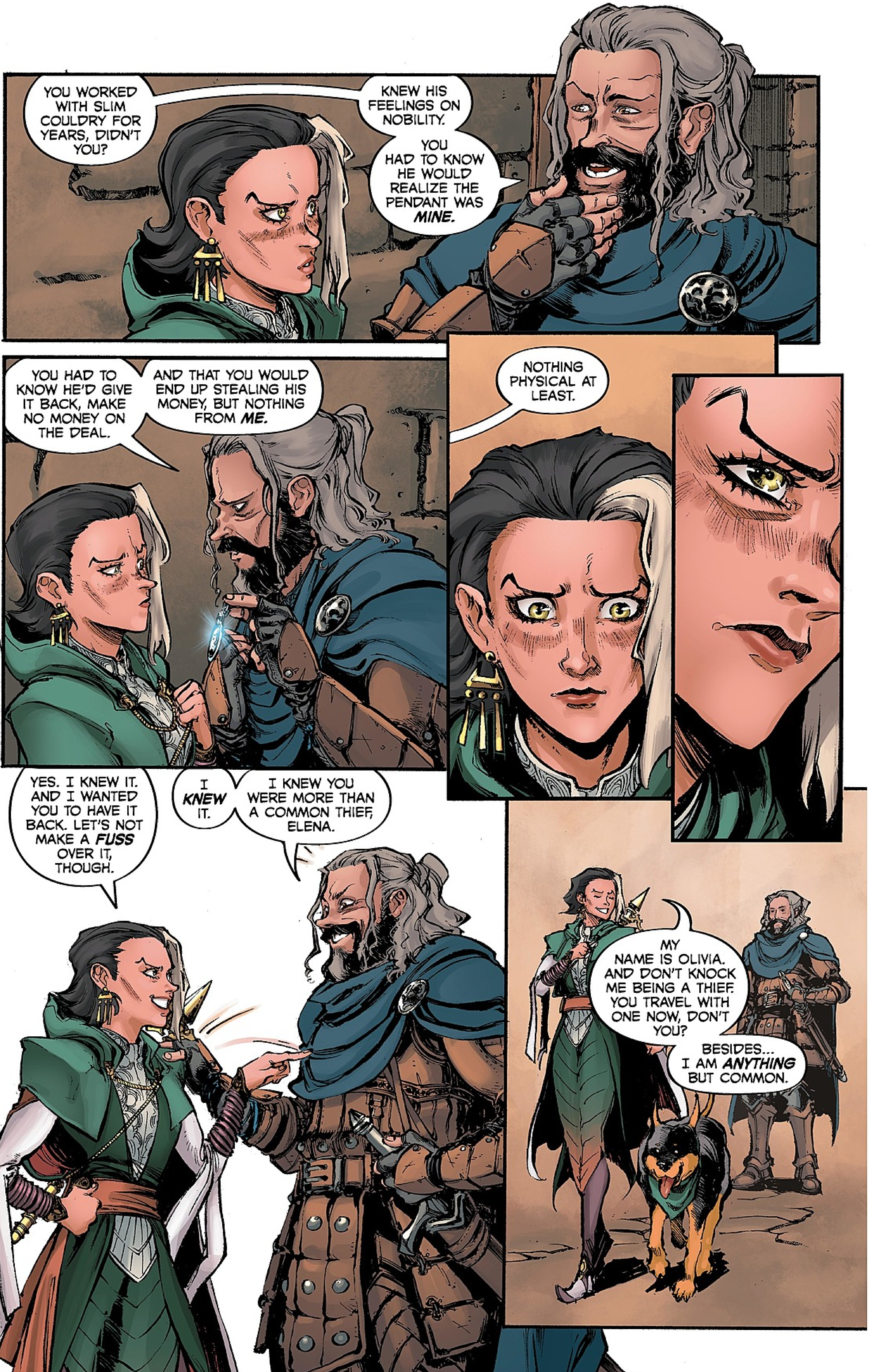

GOOD NEWS. I FOUND A DISTRACTION. IT'LL MAKE ME GOING INTO THE VAULT EASIER.
THOSE TWO I SAW YOU GO UPSTAIRS WITH? STAY AWAY FROM THEM. THEY SEEM LIKE *TROUBLE.*
MAYBE. BUT THEY'LL CREATE A DISTRACTION. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TAKE A LEDGER FROM THE VAULTS WHILE I'M IN THERE.
A DISTRACTION? DID THEY SAY WHAT KIND?
THIS IS A MISTAKE.
BUT...THIS IS A TOUGH JOB, AND I GOT US HELP.
IT MIGHT VERY WELL BE USEFUL. BUT IT MAY ALSO GET SOMEONE *KILLED.*
WAIT HERE.

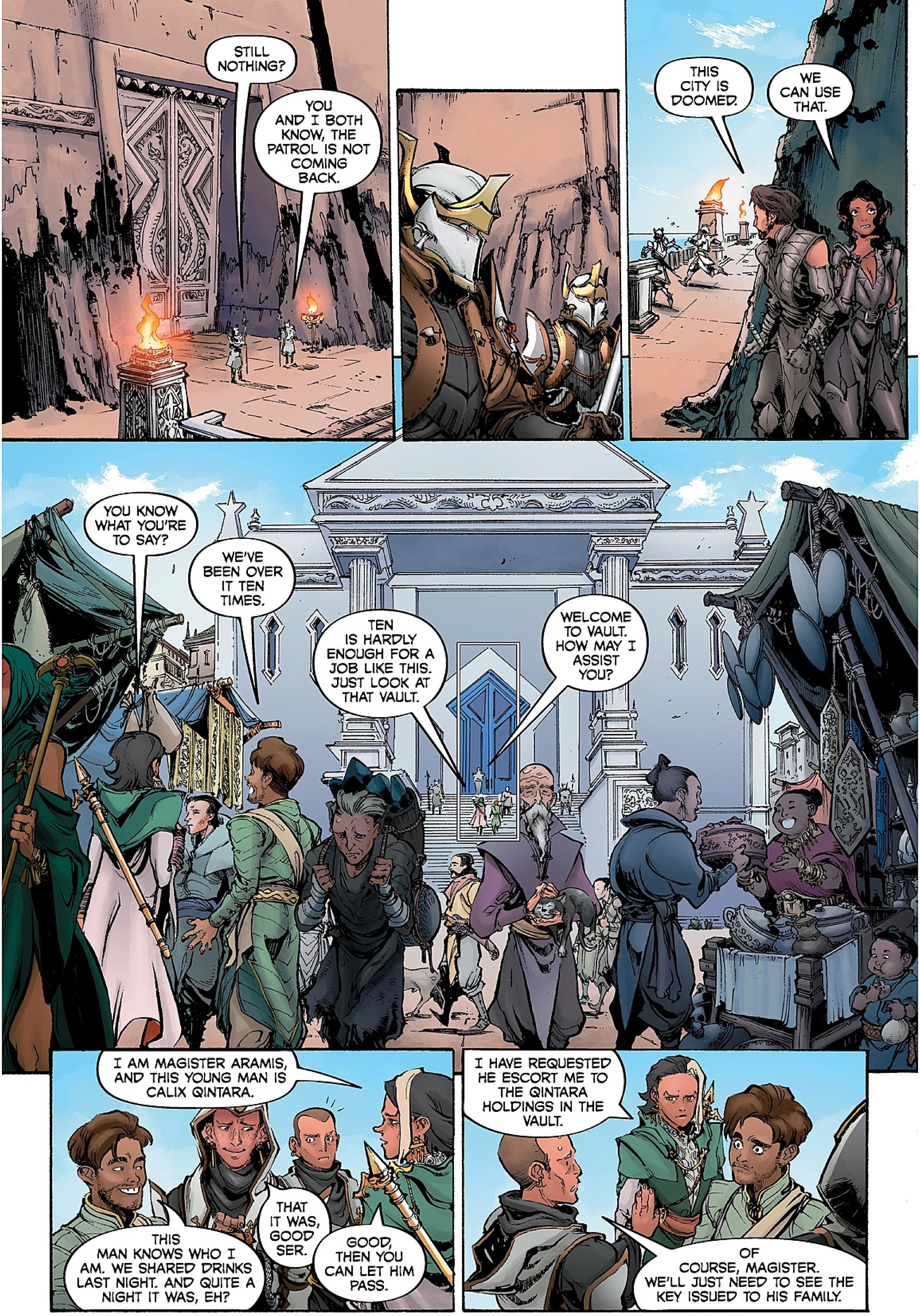

MAY I HELP YOU?
NICE ACCENT. ANTIVAN, NO?
SO, MY GUESS IS YOU TWO ARE CROWS.
WE ARE TRADERS, IN TOWN FOR A QUICK TRANSACTION.
INVOLVING A...LEDGER, WAS IT?
THE YOUNG MAN SPOKE WITH YOU. IS THERE A *PROBLEM* WITH OUR OFFER?
NO. NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
BUT THIS DISTRACTION YOU CREATE? IT CAN'T BE A VIOLENT ONE.
IF WE GET THE JOB DONE, AND ENABLE YOU TO DO THE SAME, WHY DO YOU CARE?
BECAUSE I PREFER NOT TO KILL.
I LOATHE THAT KIND OF WORK. UGLY AND PETTY.

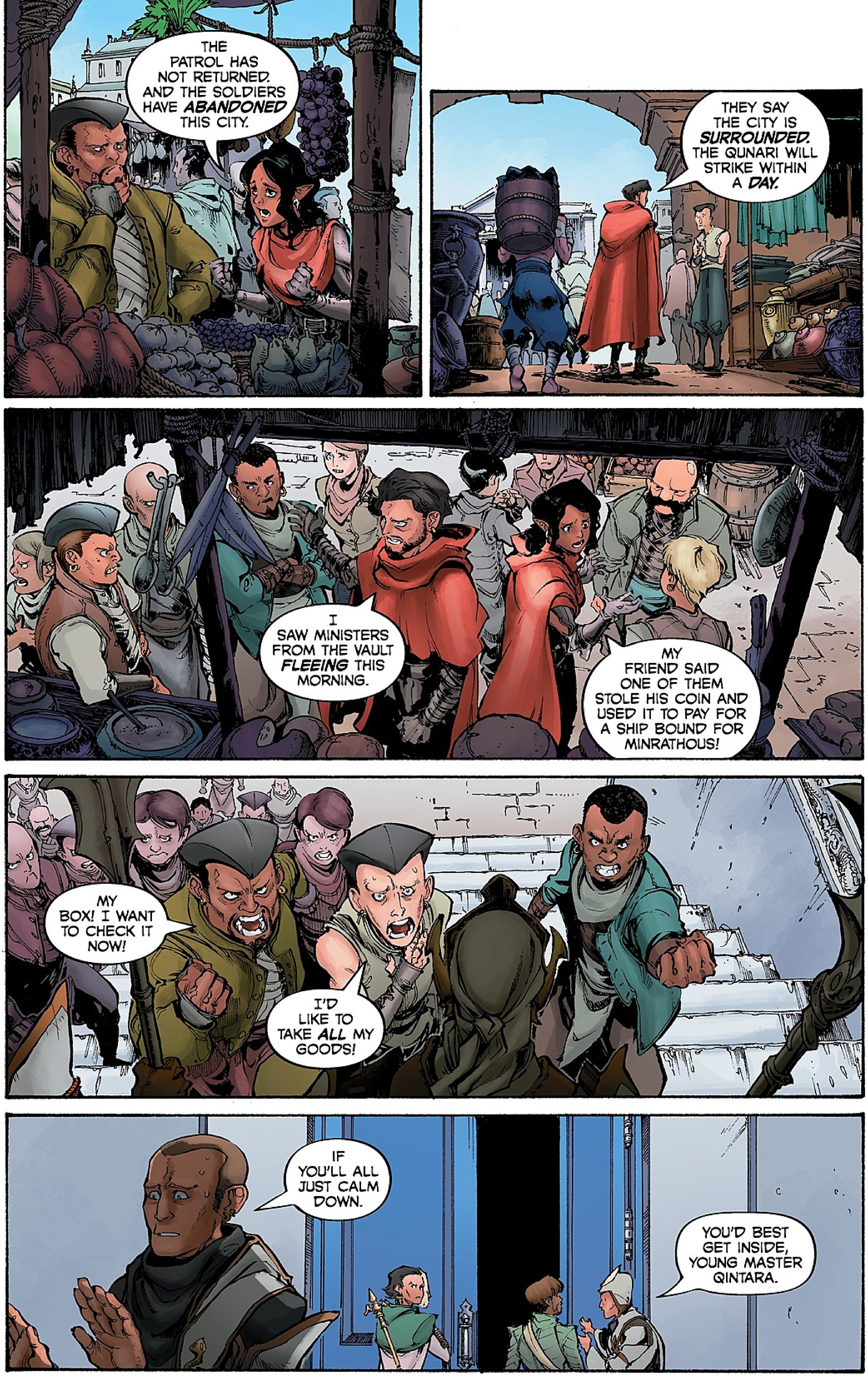

SO. IF YOU WISH US TO RETRIEVE THIS LEDGER, YOU CANNOT *KILL* OR *HURT* ANYONE TO CREATE THE DISTRACTION.
WE DON'T WANT *TROUBLE,* ANY MORE THAN YOU DO.
DEAL.
WONDERFUL.
SEE? I THINK WE'LL GET ALONG SMASHINGLY.
THIS IS WHAT WE GET FOR WORKING WITH *AMATEURS.*
I LIKE HER.

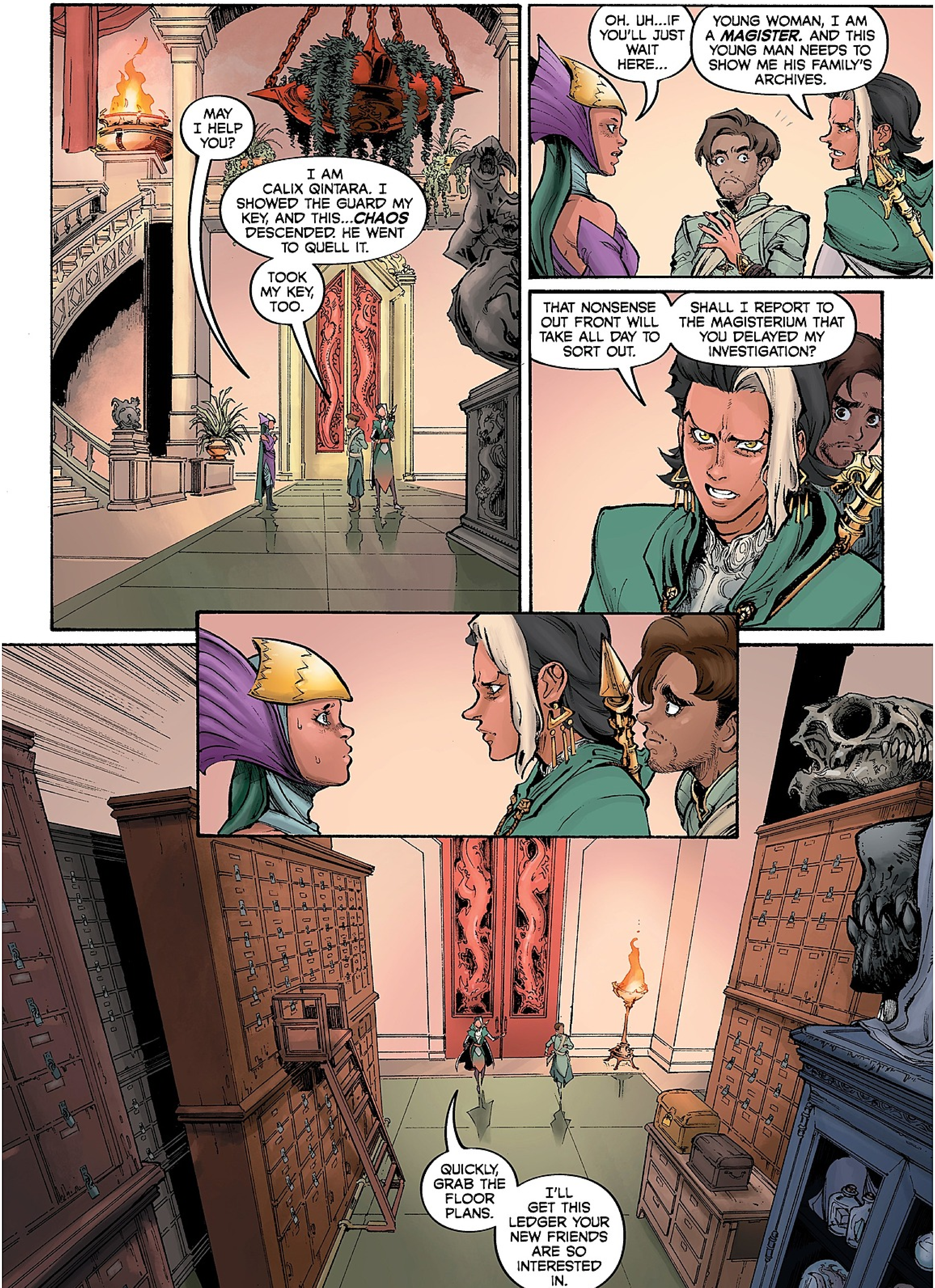

I *KNEW* IT.
KNEW WHAT?
YOU *DO* HAVE MORALS.
YOU HEARD THAT?
THE IMPORTANT PARTS.
YOU TOOK A STAND. DID WHAT WAS RIGHT.
HARDLY THE ACTIONS OF A MERE LIAR.
I JUST DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO DIE.
A MORAL STANCE.
WHY SO CONCERNED ABOUT MY MORALITY?
BRAVE SER KNIGHT...ARE YOU TRYING TO REDEEM ME?

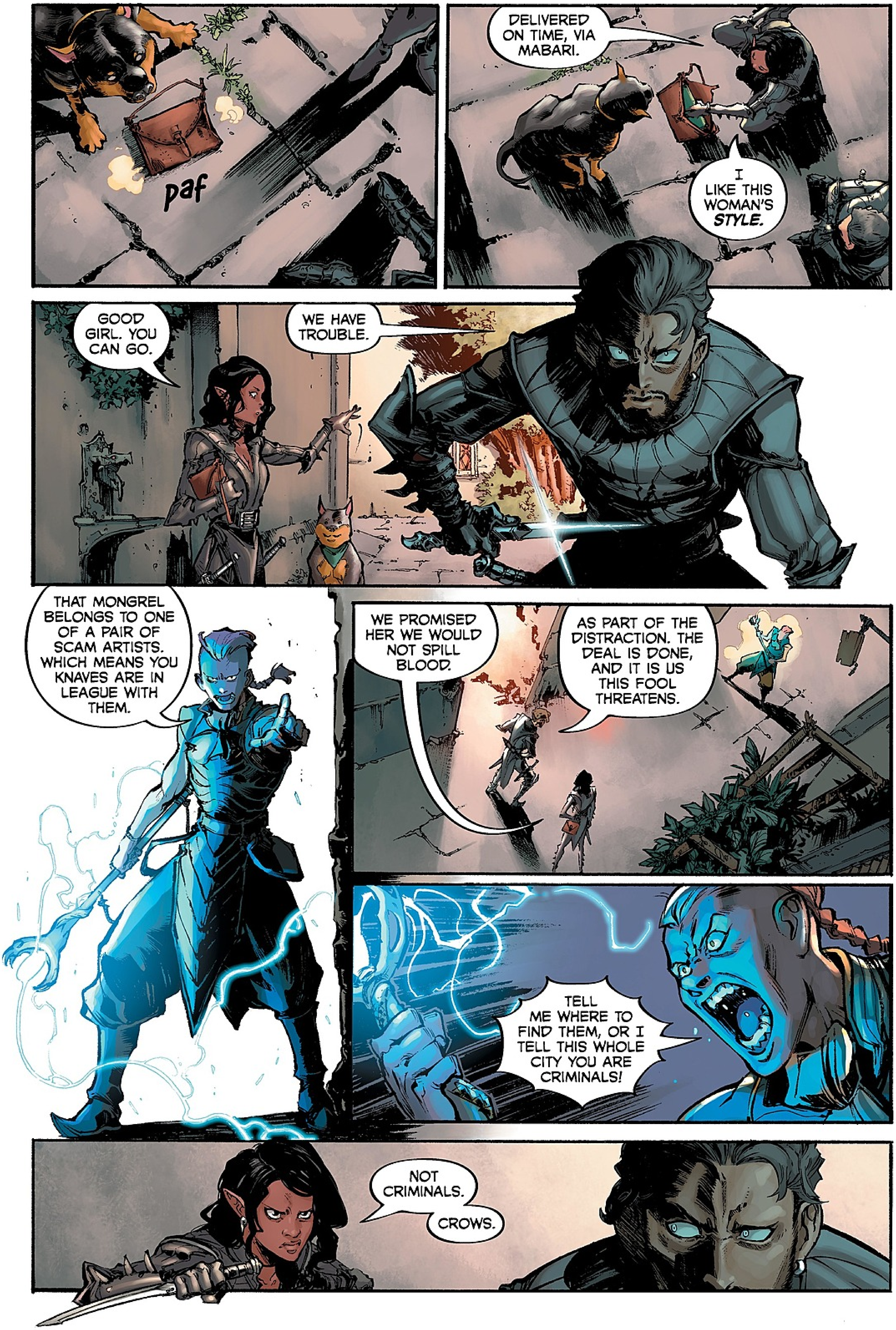

I "FACILITATE" CRIMES AGAINST *WEALTHY* NOBLES AND ACT AS A GO-BETWEEN FOR THE SALE OF THE "PROCEEDS."
LADY OLIVIA USUALLY PILFERS ITEMS OF VALUE FROM UNSUSPECTING NOBLES. SHE SELLS THEM TO ME. I SELL 'EM ELSEWHERE, AND MY PROFITS GO TO FEED THE POOR.
MY FIFTEEN COUSINS. DIRT POOR, THEY ARE.
I BOUGHT THIS OFF HER. ONLY AFTER I'D PAID DID I GIVE IT A GOOD LOOK.
I REALIZED THAT SHE'D STOLEN FROM SER AARON HAWTHORNE. LANDLESS KNIGHT. NO WEALTH TO SPEAK OF. ONE OF US.
THE TYPE OF MARK I WOULD *NEVER* TARGET. SO I'M GIVING THIS BACK TO YOU.
SER AARON? EVERYTHING OKAY? THEY SAY YOU LEFT THE PALACE IN A HURRY?
KING ALISTAIR, MY APOLOGIES. LADY ELENA LEFT, AND I WAS WORRIED.
WILL THIS AFFECT YOUR TRIP TO EDGEHALL? WE CAN DELAY IT.
NO, YOUR HIGHNESS. I WILL LEAVE TOMORROW.
ANY TROUBLE HERE?
JUST A MERCHANT, MY KING.
I WILL JOIN YOU FOR LUNCH ONCE MY BUSINESS IS DONE.
WHAT YOU JUST DID? ONE OF MANY REASONS I'M HAPPY TO EAT THIS LOSS, SER AARON.
HOWEVER, IF YOU SEE LADY OLIVIA PRYDE AGAIN... TELL HER SHE'S DEAD TO ME.

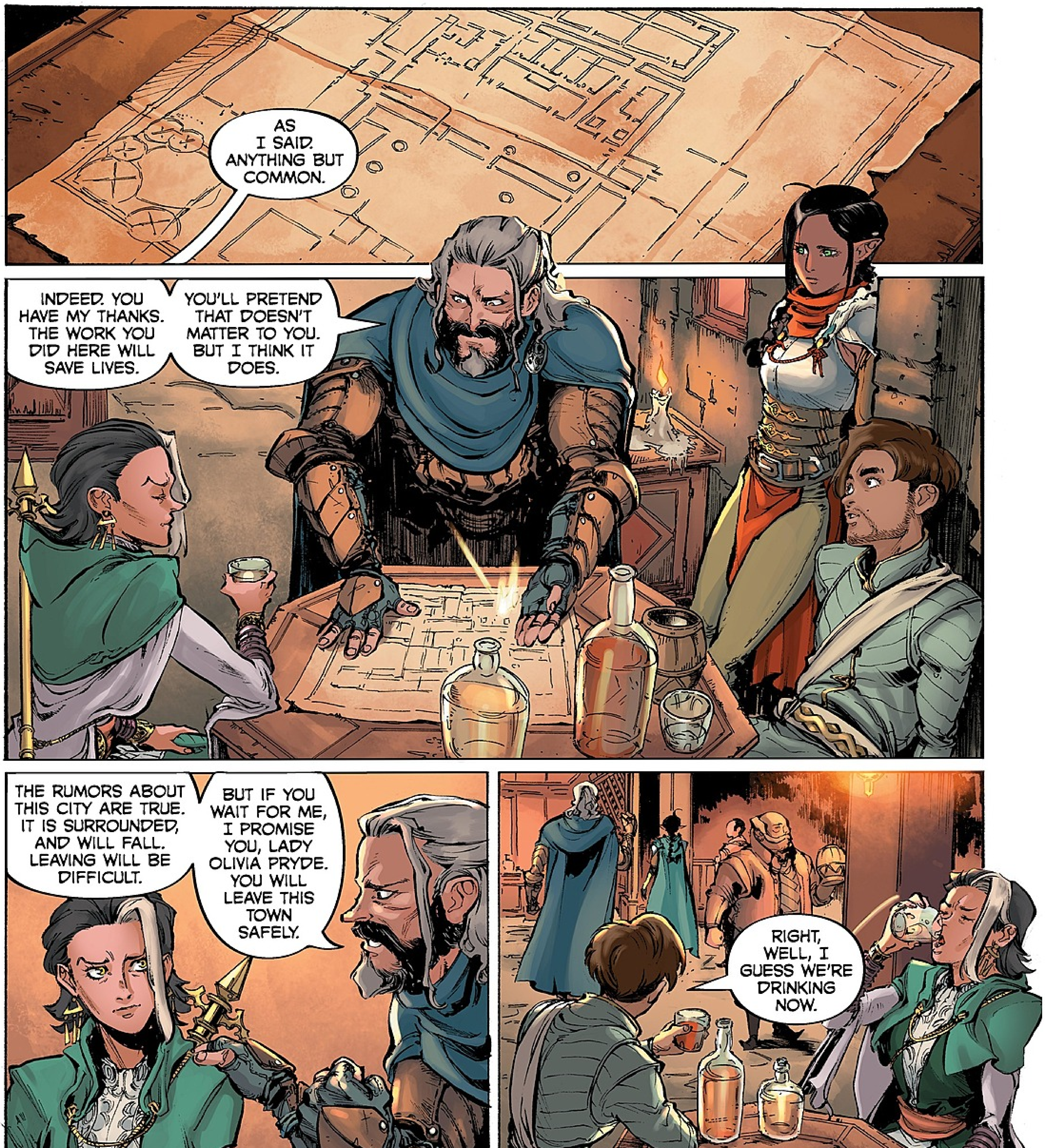

YOU WORKED WITH SLIM COULDRY FOR YEARS, DIDN'T YOU?
KNEW HIS FEELINGS ON NOBILITY.
YOU HAD TO KNOW HE WOULD REALIZE THE PENDANT WAS *MINE.*
YOU HAD TO KNOW HE'D GIVE IT BACK, MAKE NO MONEY ON THE DEAL.
AND THAT YOU WOULD END UP STEALING HIS MONEY, BUT NOTHING FROM *ME.*
NOTHING PHYSICAL AT LEAST.
YES. I KNEW IT. AND I WANTED YOU TO HAVE IT BACK. LET'S NOT MAKE A *FUSS* OVER IT, THOUGH.
I *KNEW* IT.
I KNEW YOU WERE MORE THAN A COMMON THIEF, ELENA.
MY NAME IS OLIVIA. AND DON'T KNOCK ME BEING A THIEF. YOU TRAVEL WITH ONE NOW, DON'T YOU?
BESIDES... I AM *ANYTHING* BUT COMMON.

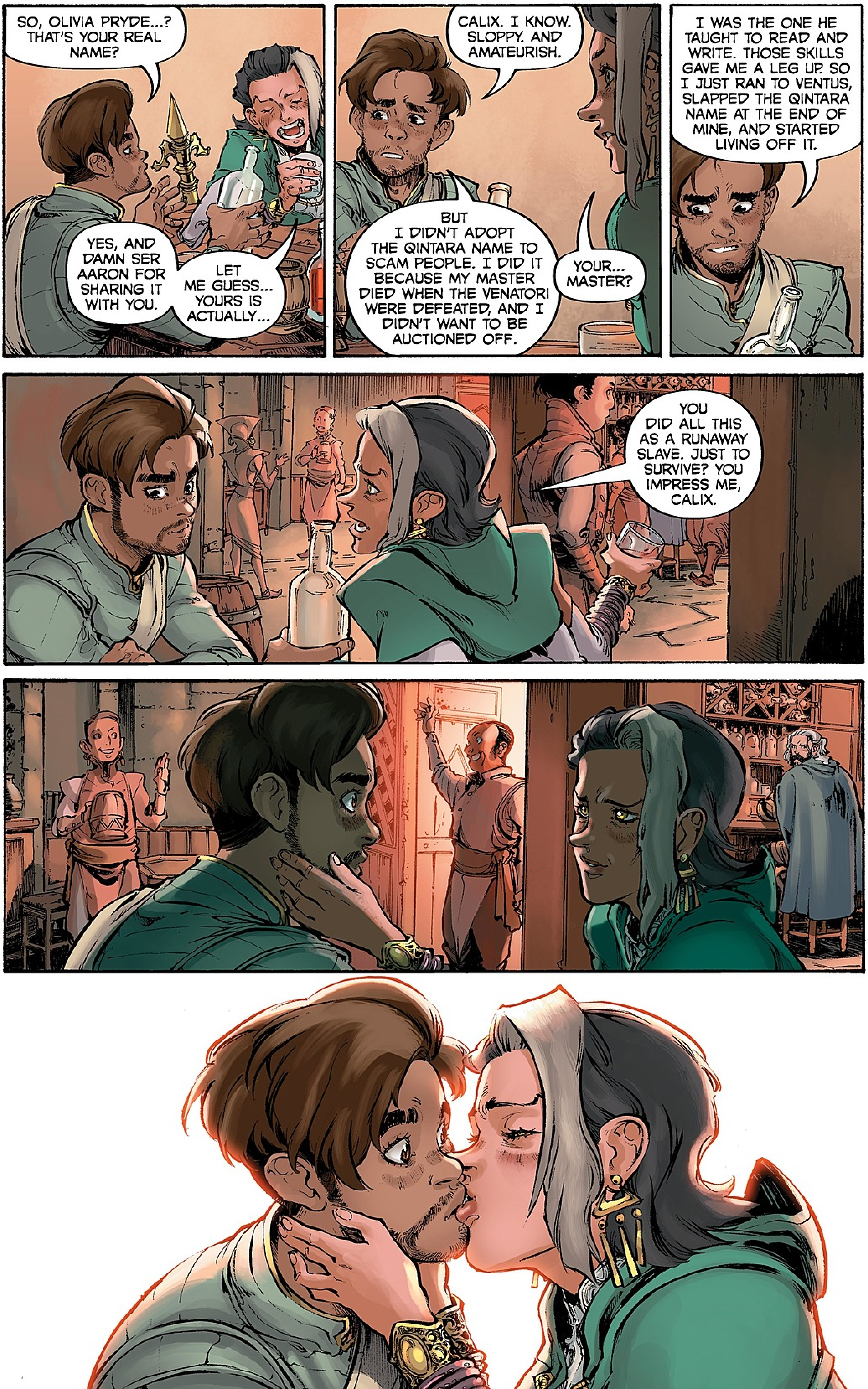

STILL NOTHING?
YOU AND I BOTH KNOW, THE PATROL IS NOT COMING BACK.
THIS CITY IS DOOMED.
WE CAN USE THAT.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TO SAY?
WE'VE BEEN OVER IT TEN TIMES.
TEN IS HARDLY ENOUGH FOR A JOB LIKE THIS. JUST LOOK AT THAT VAULT.
WELCOME TO VAULT. HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU?
I AM MAGISTER ARAMIS, AND THIS YOUNG MAN IS CALIX QINTARA.
THIS MAN KNOWS WHO I AM. WE SHARED DRINKS LAST NIGHT. AND QUITE A NIGHT IT WAS, EH?
THAT IT WAS, GOOD SER.
GOOD, THEN YOU CAN LET HIM PASS.
I HAVE REQUESTED HE ESCORT ME TO THE QINTARA HOLDINGS IN THE VAULT.
OF COURSE, MAGISTER. WE'LL JUST NEED TO SEE THE KEY ISSUED TO HIS FAMILY.

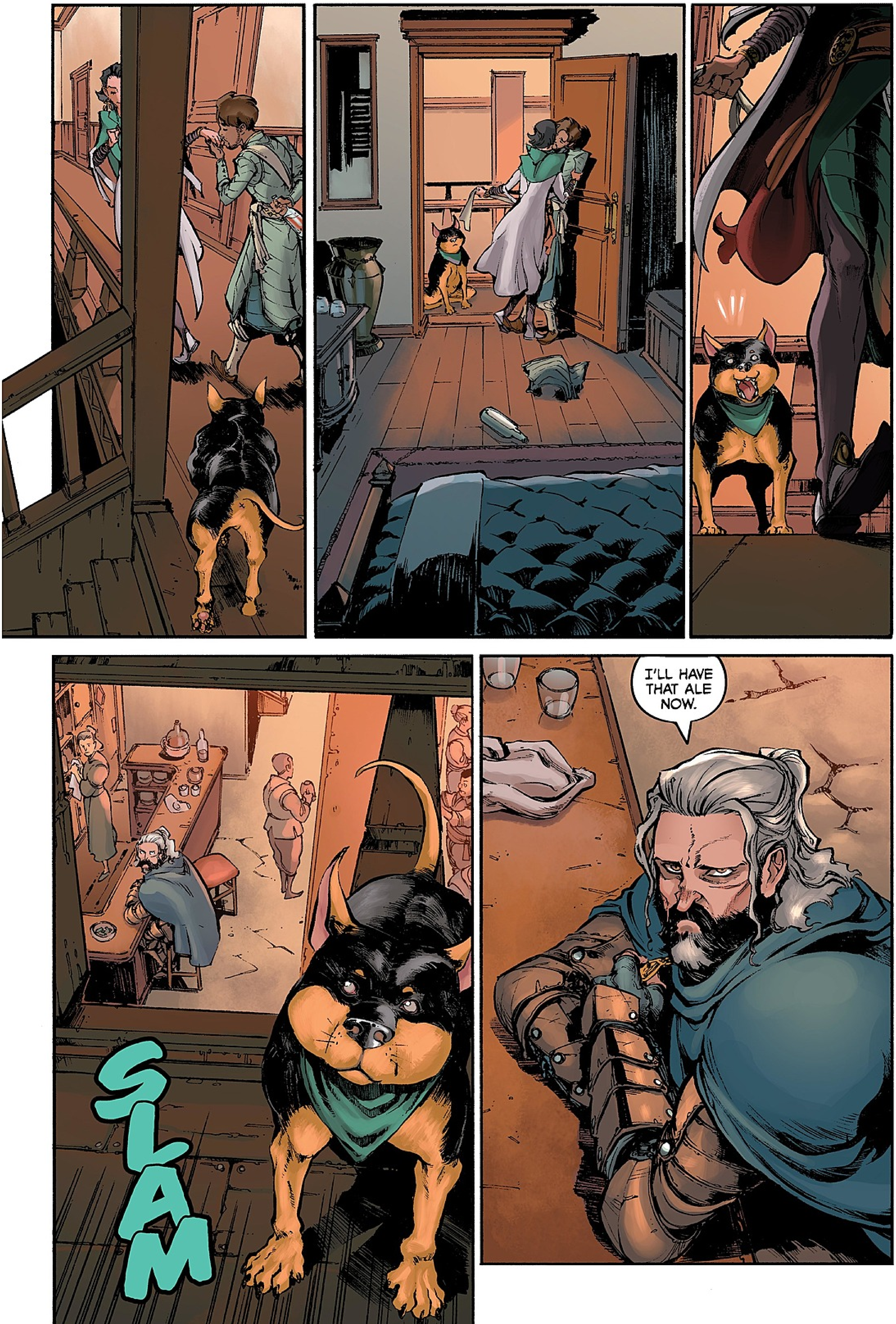

THE PATROL HAS NOT RETURNED. AND THE SOLDIERS HAVE *ABANDONED* THIS CITY.
THEY SAY THE CITY IS ***SURROUNDED.*** THE QUNARI WILL STRIKE WITHIN A ***DAY.***
I SAW MINISTERS FROM THE VAULT ***FLEEING*** THIS MORNING.
MY FRIEND SAID ONE OF THEM STOLE HIS COIN AND USED IT TO PAY FOR A SHIP BOUND FOR MINRATHOUS!
MY BOX! I WANT TO CHECK IT NOW!
I'D LIKE TO TAKE ***ALL*** MY GOODS!
IF YOU'LL ALL JUST CALM DOWN.
YOU'D BEST GET INSIDE, YOUNG MASTER QINTARA.

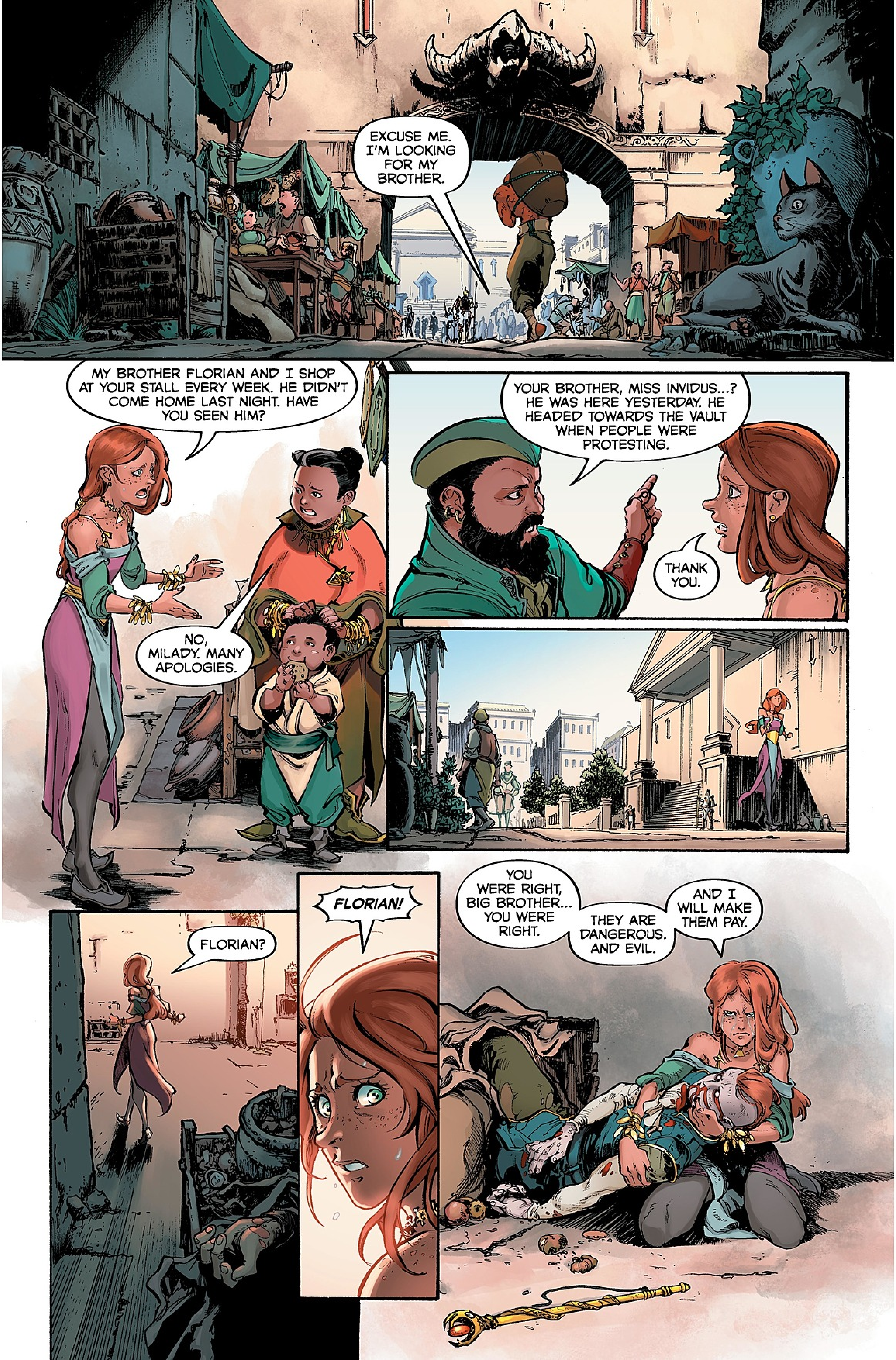

MAY I HELP YOU?
I AM CALIX QINTARA. I SHOWED THE GUARD MY KEY, AND THIS...*CHAOS* DESCENDED. HE WENT TO QUELL IT.
TOOK MY KEY, TOO.
OH. UH...IF YOU'LL JUST WAIT HERE...
YOUNG WOMAN, I AM A ***MAGISTER.*** AND THIS YOUNG MAN NEEDS TO SHOW ME HIS FAMILY'S ARCHIVES.
THAT NONSENSE OUT FRONT WILL TAKE ALL DAY TO SORT OUT.
SHALL I REPORT TO THE MAGISTERIUM THAT YOU DELAYED MY INVESTIGATION?
QUICKLY, GRAB THE FLOOR PLANS.
I'LL GET THIS LEDGER YOUR NEW FRIENDS ARE SO INTERESTED IN.

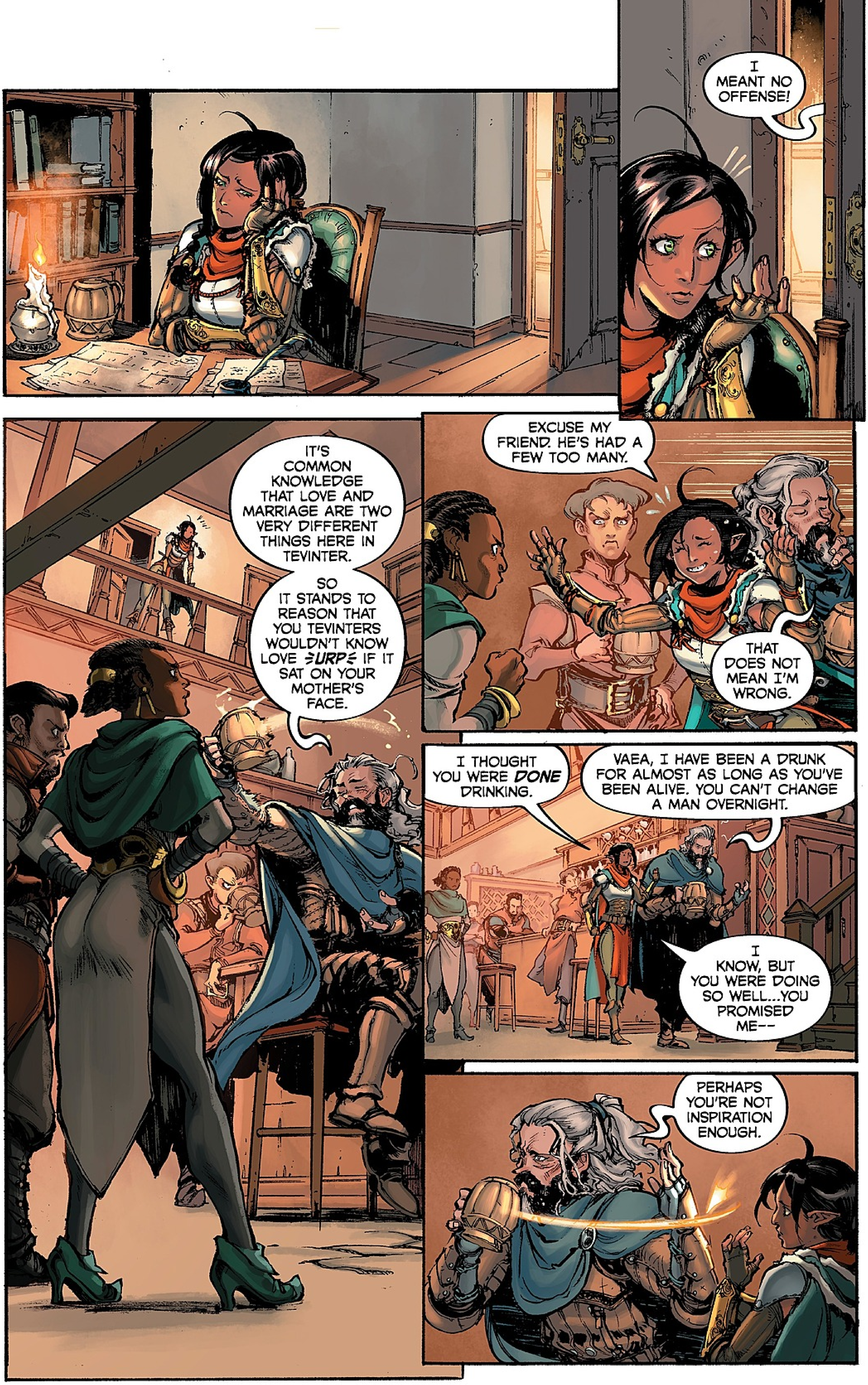

paf
DELIVERED ON TIME, VIA MABARI.
I LIKE THIS WOMAN'S *STYLE.*
GOOD GIRL. YOU CAN GO.
WE HAVE TROUBLE.
THAT MONGREL BELONGS TO ONE OF A PAIR OF SCAM ARTISTS. WHICH MEANS YOU KNAVES ARE IN LEAGUE WITH THEM.
WE PROMISED HER WE WOULD NOT SPILL BLOOD.
AS PART OF THE DISTRACTION. THE DEAL IS DONE, AND IT IS US THIS FOOL THREATENS.
TELL ME WHERE TO FIND THEM, OR I TELL THIS WHOLE CITY YOU ARE CRIMINALS!
NOT CRIMINALS.
CROWS.

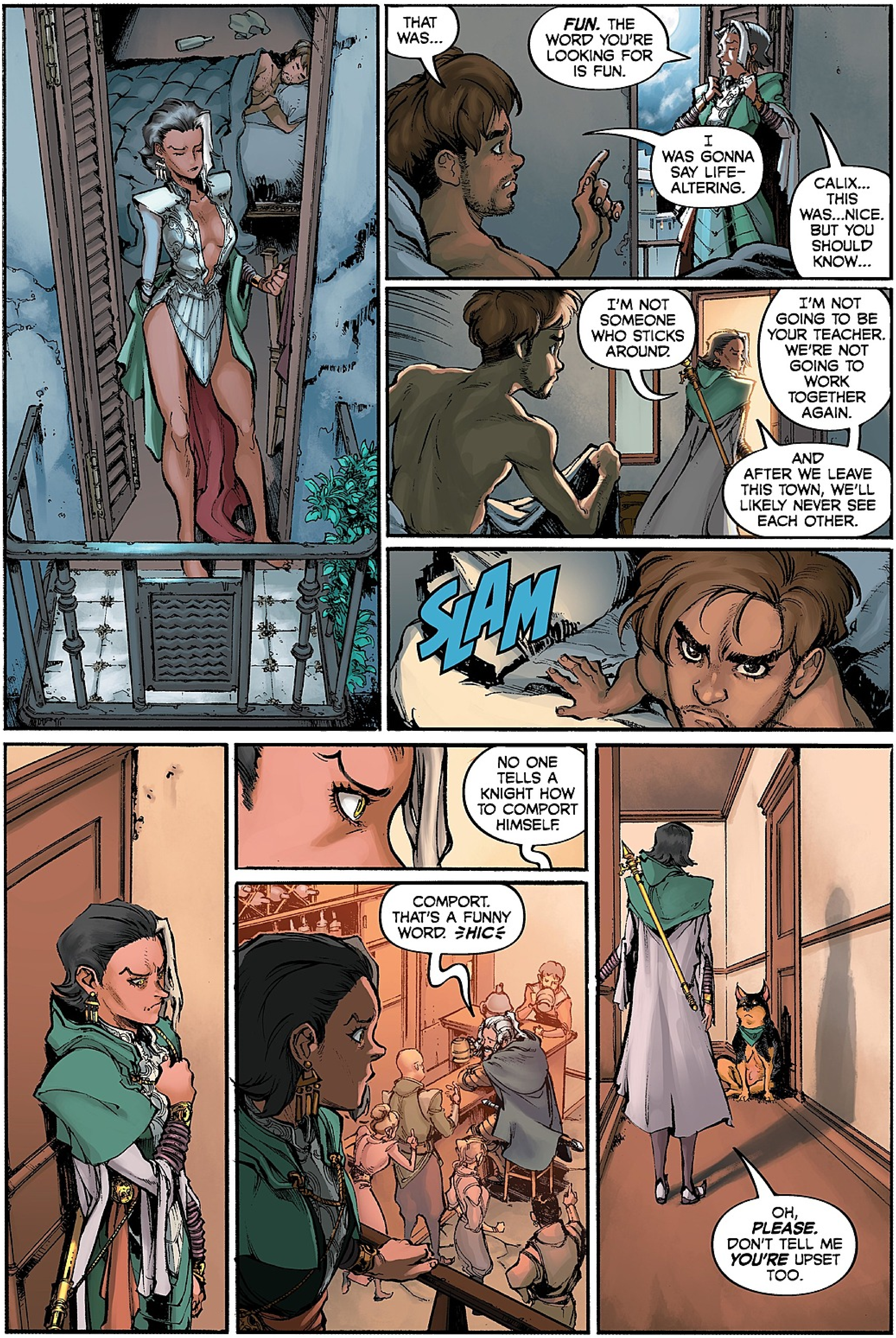

AS I SAID. ANYTHING BUT COMMON.
INDEED. YOU HAVE MY THANKS. THE WORK YOU DID HERE WILL SAVE LIVES.
YOU'LL PRETEND THAT DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU. BUT I THINK IT DOES.
THE RUMORS ABOUT THIS CITY ARE TRUE. IT IS SURROUNDED, AND WILL FALL. LEAVING WILL BE DIFFICULT.
BUT IF YOU WAIT FOR ME, I PROMISE YOU, LADY OLIVIA PRYDE. YOU WILL LEAVE THIS TOWN SAFELY.
RIGHT, WELL, I GUESS WE'RE DRINKING NOW.
THE WAY YOU SWOOPED IN THERE? TALKING ALL MAGISTER-EY? AMAZING.
YOU DID QUITE WELL, YOURSELF.
FOR A MORON, YOU MEAN.
YES. FOR A MORON.

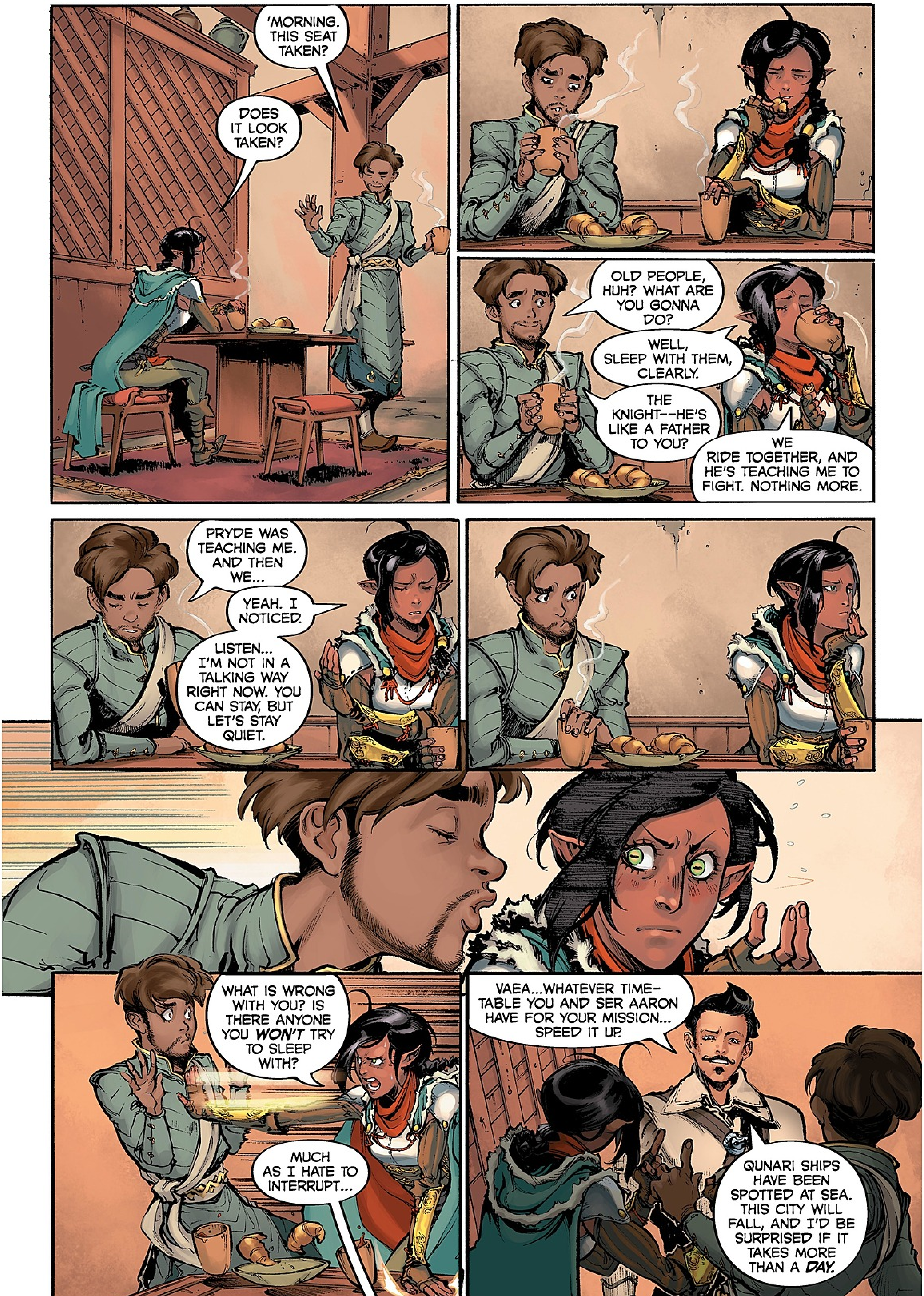

SO, OLIVIA PRYDE...? THAT'S YOUR REAL NAME?
YES, AND DAMN SER AARON FOR SHARING IT WITH YOU.
LET ME GUESS... YOURS IS ACTUALLY...
CALIX. I KNOW. SLOPPY. AND AMATEURISH.
BUT I DIDN'T ADOPT THE QINTARA NAME TO SCAM PEOPLE. I DID IT BECAUSE MY MASTER DIED WHEN THE VENATORI WERE DEFEATED, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO BE AUCTIONED OFF.
YOUR... MASTER?
I WAS THE ONE HE TAUGHT TO READ AND WRITE. THOSE SKILLS GAVE ME A LEG UP. SO I JUST RAN TO VENTUS, SLAPPED THE QINTARA NAME AT THE END OF MINE, AND STARTED LIVING OFF IT.
YOU DID ALL THIS AS A RUNAWAY SLAVE. JUST TO SURVIVE? YOU IMPRESS ME, CALIX.

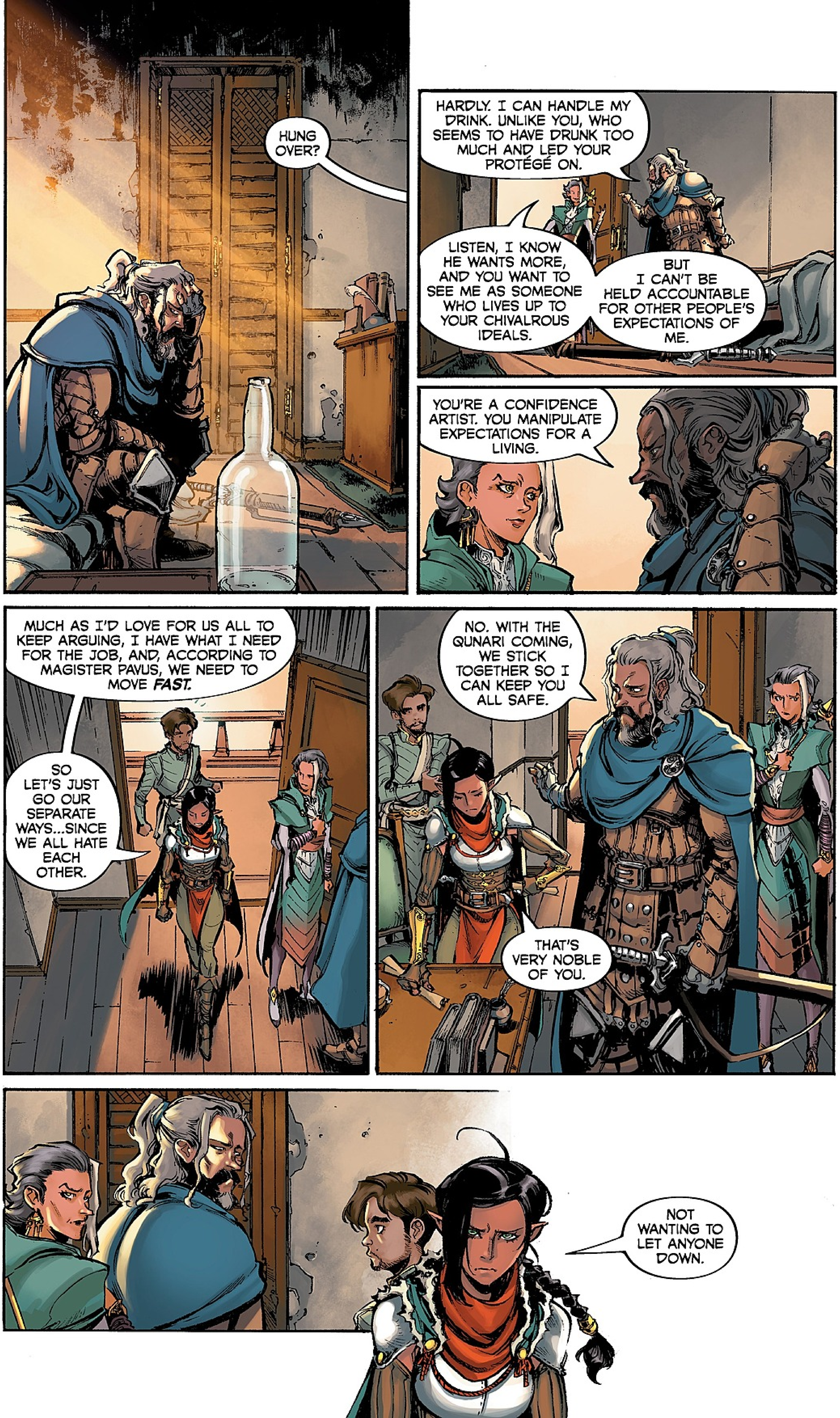

SLAM
I'LL HAVE THAT ALE NOW.

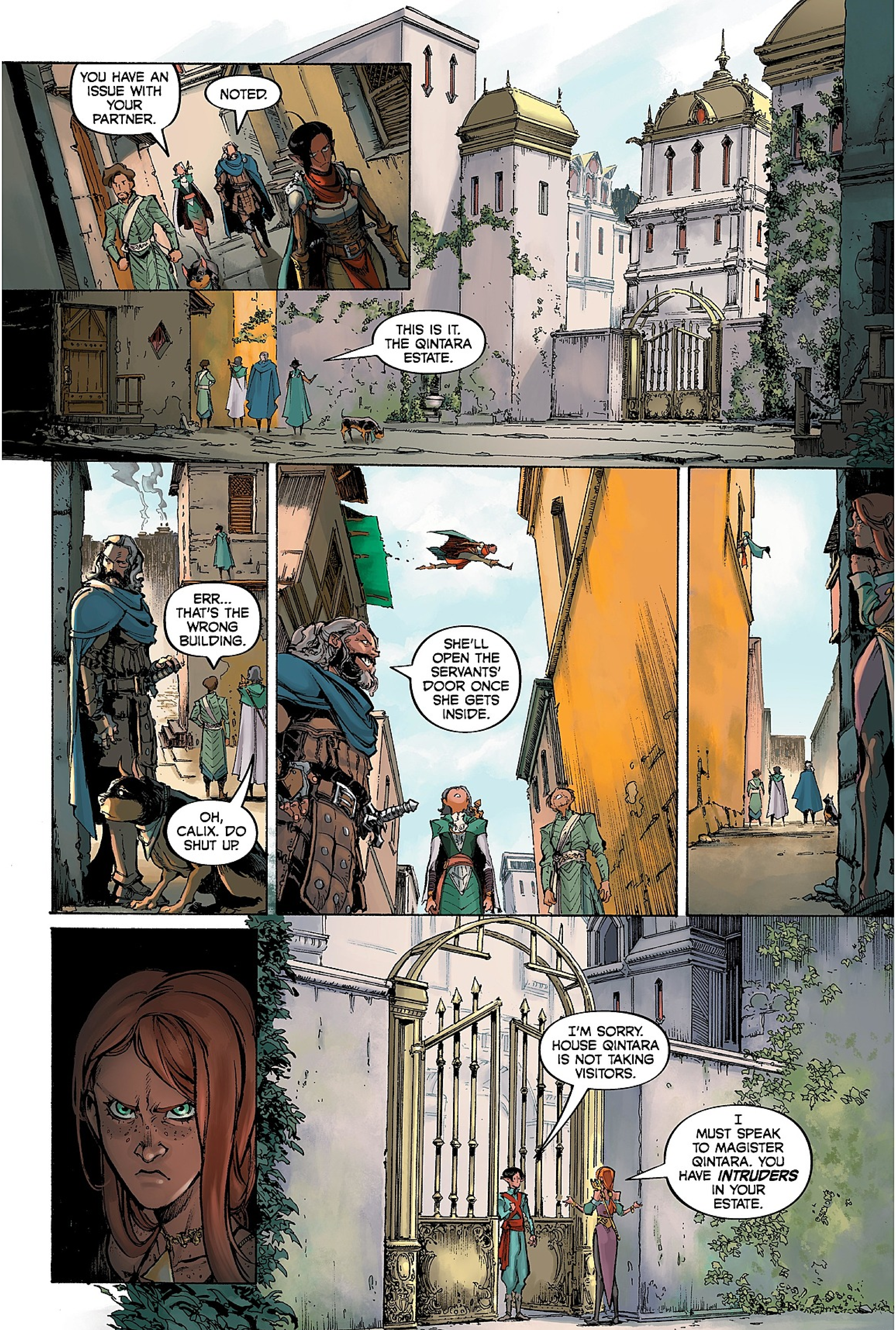

EXCUSE ME. I'M LOOKING FOR MY BROTHER.
MY BROTHER FLORIAN AND I SHOP AT YOUR STALL EVERY WEEK. HE DIDN'T COME HOME LAST NIGHT. HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?
NO, MILADY. MANY APOLOGIES.
YOUR BROTHER, MISS INVIDUS...? HE WAS HERE YESTERDAY. HE HEADED TOWARDS THE VAULT WHEN PEOPLE WERE PROTESTING.
THANK YOU.
FLORIAN?
FLORIAN!
YOU WERE RIGHT, BIG BROTHER... YOU WERE RIGHT.
THEY ARE DANGEROUS. AND EVIL.
AND I WILL MAKE THEM PAY.

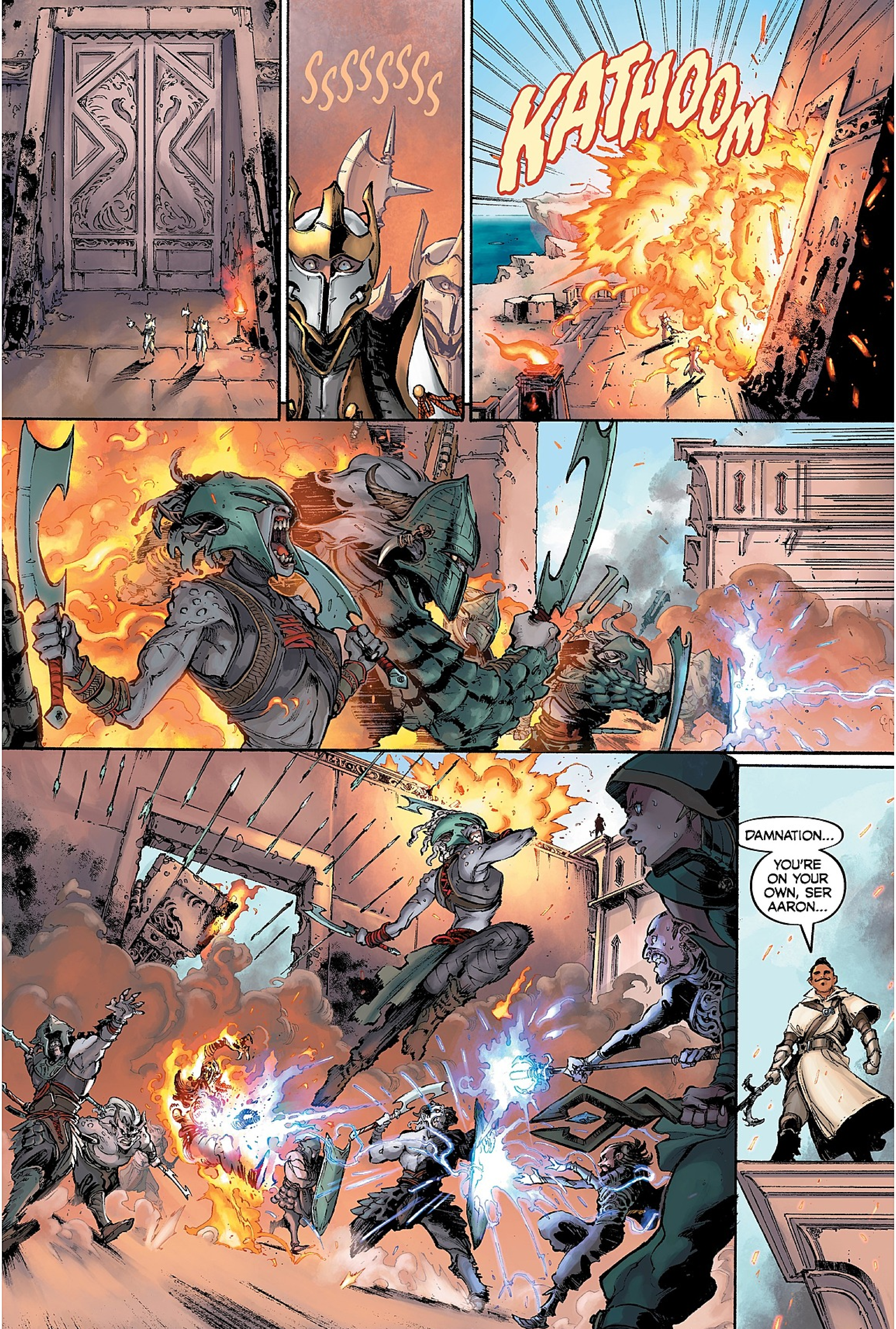

I MEANT NO OFFENSE!
IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT LOVE AND MARRIAGE ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT THINGS HERE IN TEVINTER.
SO IT STANDS TO REASON THAT YOU TEVINTERS WOULDN'T KNOW LOVE *URP* IF IT SAT ON YOUR MOTHER'S FACE.
EXCUSE MY FRIEND. HE'S HAD A FEW TOO MANY.
THAT DOES NOT MEAN I'M WRONG.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE *DONE* DRINKING.
VAEA, I HAVE BEEN A DRUNK FOR ALMOST AS LONG AS YOU'VE BEEN ALIVE. YOU CAN'T CHANGE A MAN OVERNIGHT.
I KNOW, BUT YOU WERE DOING SO WELL...YOU PROMISED ME--
PERHAPS YOU'RE NOT INSPIRATION ENOUGH.

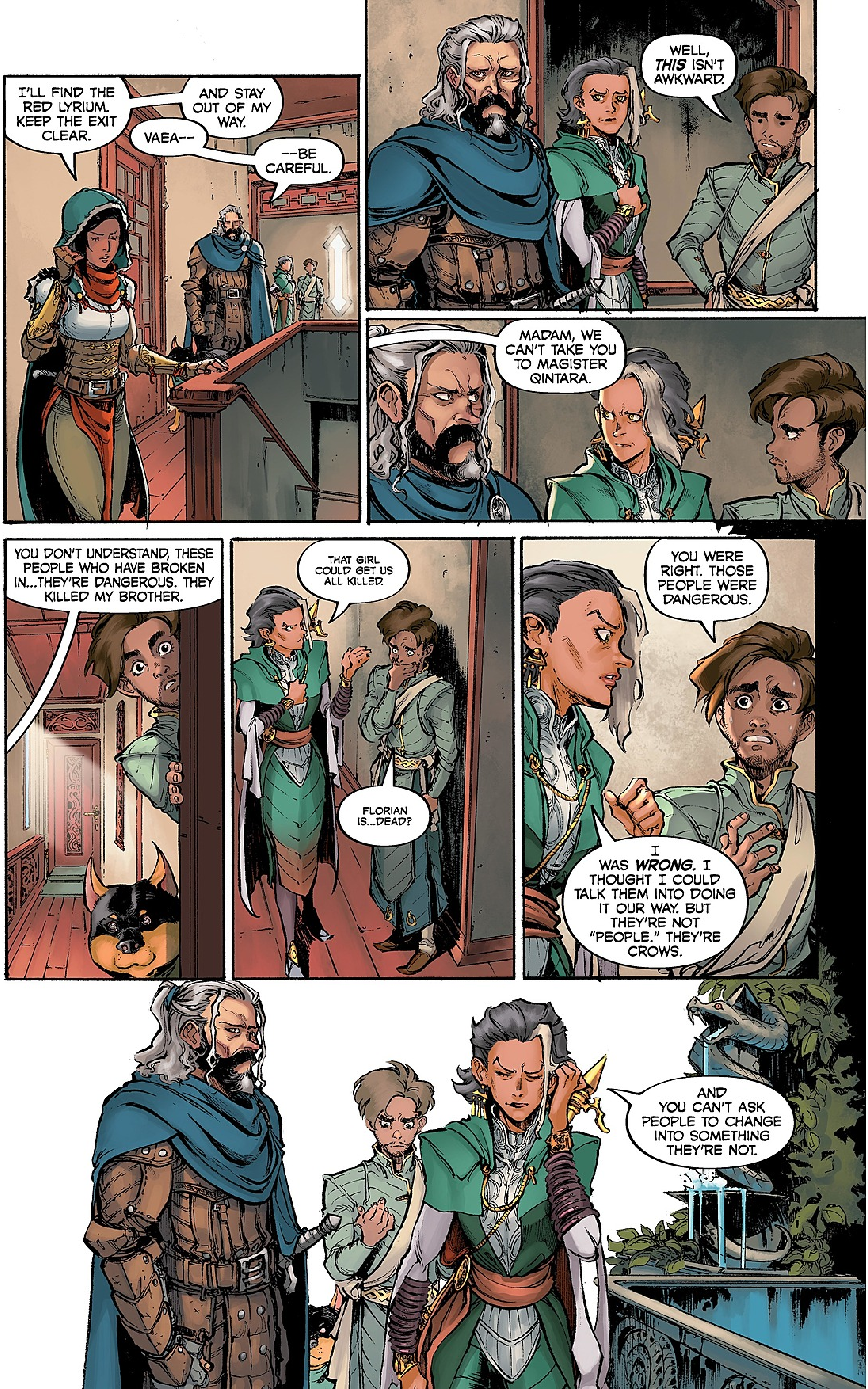

THAT WAS...
FUN. THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS FUN.
I WAS GONNA SAY LIFE-ALTERING.
CALIX... THIS WAS...NICE. BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW...
I'M NOT SOMEONE WHO STICKS AROUND.
I'M NOT GOING TO BE YOUR TEACHER. WE'RE NOT GOING TO WORK TOGETHER AGAIN.
AND AFTER WE LEAVE THIS TOWN, WE'LL LIKELY NEVER SEE EACH OTHER.
SLAM
NO ONE TELLS A KNIGHT HOW TO COMPORT HIMSELF.
COMPORT. THAT'S A FUNNY WORD. *HIC*
OH, *PLEASE.* DON'T TELL ME *YOU'RE* UPSET TOO.

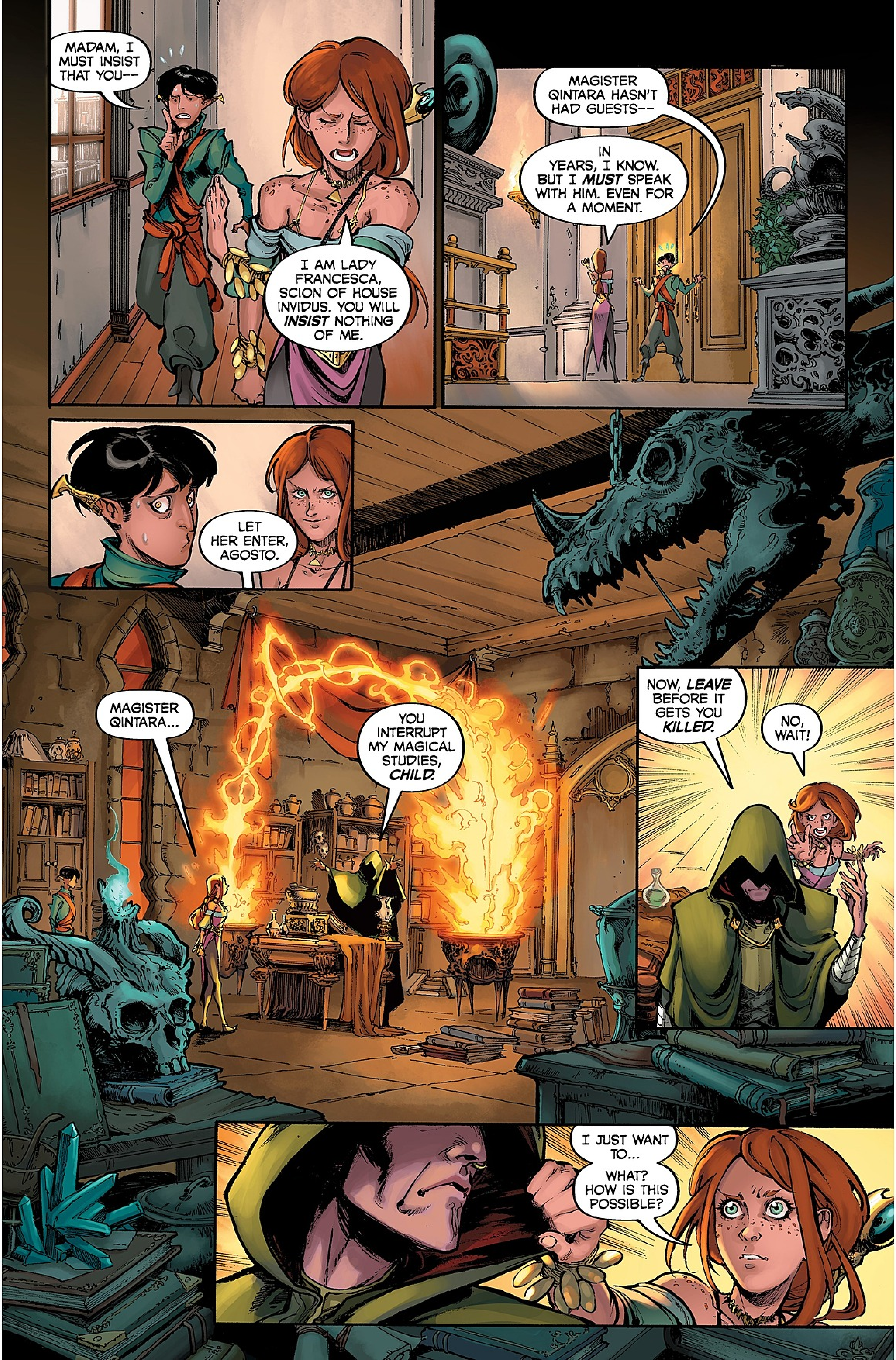

'MORNING. THIS SEAT TAKEN?
DOES IT LOOK TAKEN?
OLD PEOPLE, HUH? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
WELL, SLEEP WITH THEM, CLEARLY.
THE KNIGHT--HE'S LIKE A FATHER TO YOU?
WE RIDE TOGETHER, AND HE'S TEACHING ME TO FIGHT. NOTHING MORE.
PRYDE WAS TEACHING ME. AND THEN WE...
YEAH. I NOTICED.
LISTEN... I'M NOT IN A TALKING WAY RIGHT NOW. YOU CAN STAY, BUT LET'S STAY QUIET.
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? IS THERE ANYONE YOU *WON'T* TRY TO SLEEP WITH?
MUCH AS I HATE TO INTERRUPT...
VAEA...WHATEVER TIME-TABLE YOU AND SER AARON HAVE FOR YOUR MISSION... SPEED IT UP.
QUNARI SHIPS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED AT SEA. THIS CITY WILL FALL, AND I'D BE SURPRISED IF IT TAKES MORE THAN A *DAY.*

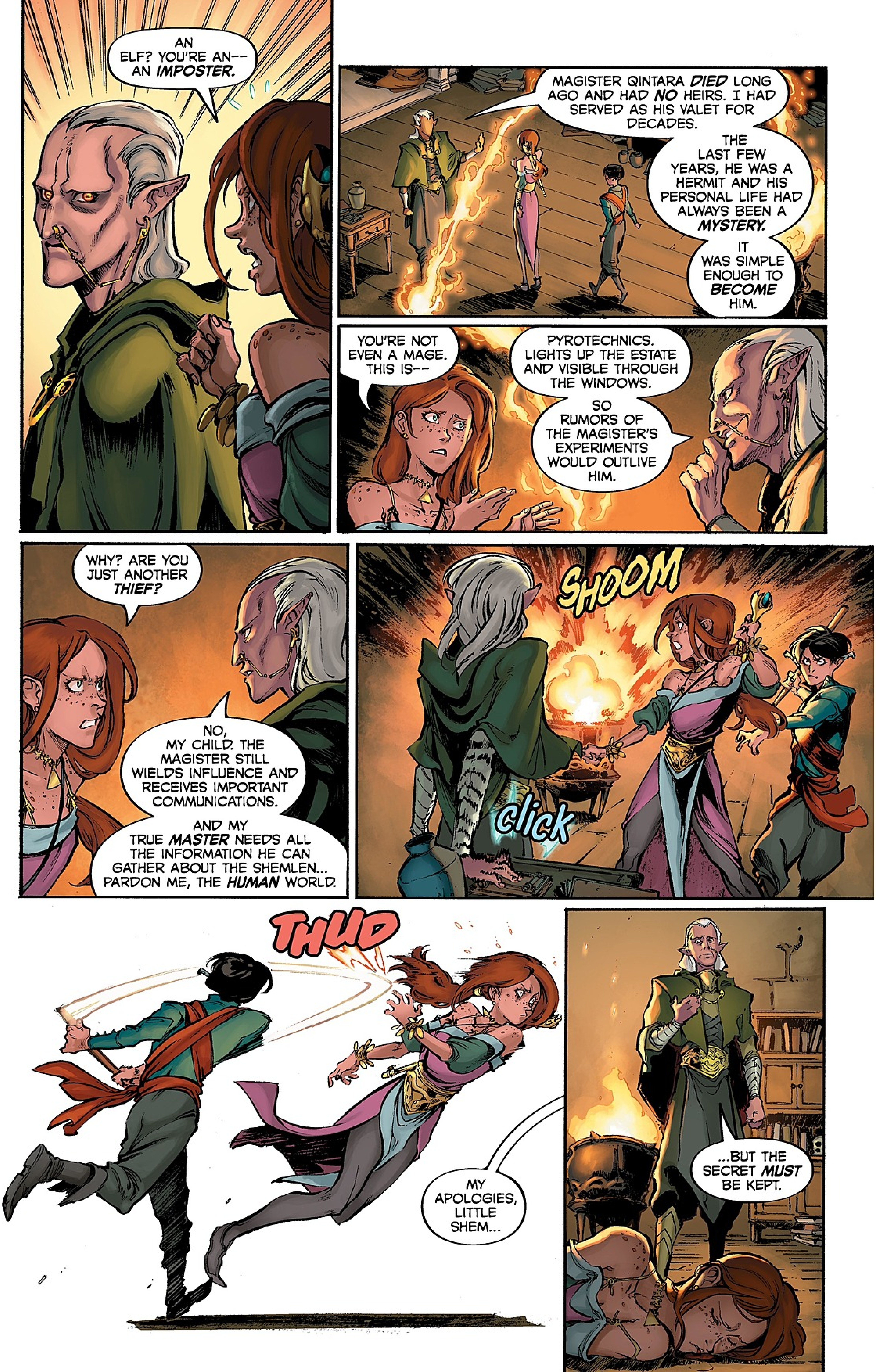

HUNG OVER?
HARDLY. I CAN HANDLE MY DRINK. UNLIKE YOU, WHO SEEMS TO HAVE DRUNK TOO MUCH AND LED YOUR PROTÉGÉ ON.
LISTEN, I KNOW HE WANTS MORE, AND YOU WANT TO SEE ME AS SOMEONE WHO LIVES UP TO YOUR CHIVALROUS IDEALS.
BUT I CAN'T BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS OF ME.
YOU'RE A CONFIDENCE ARTIST. YOU MANIPULATE EXPECTATIONS FOR A LIVING.
MUCH AS I'D LOVE FOR US ALL TO KEEP ARGUING, I HAVE WHAT I NEED FOR THE JOB, AND, ACCORDING TO MAGISTER PAVUS, WE NEED TO MOVE ***FAST.***
SO LET'S JUST GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS...SINCE WE ALL HATE EACH OTHER.
NO. WITH THE QUNARI COMING, WE STICK TOGETHER SO I CAN KEEP YOU ALL SAFE.
THAT'S VERY NOBLE OF YOU.
NOT WANTING TO LET ANYONE DOWN.

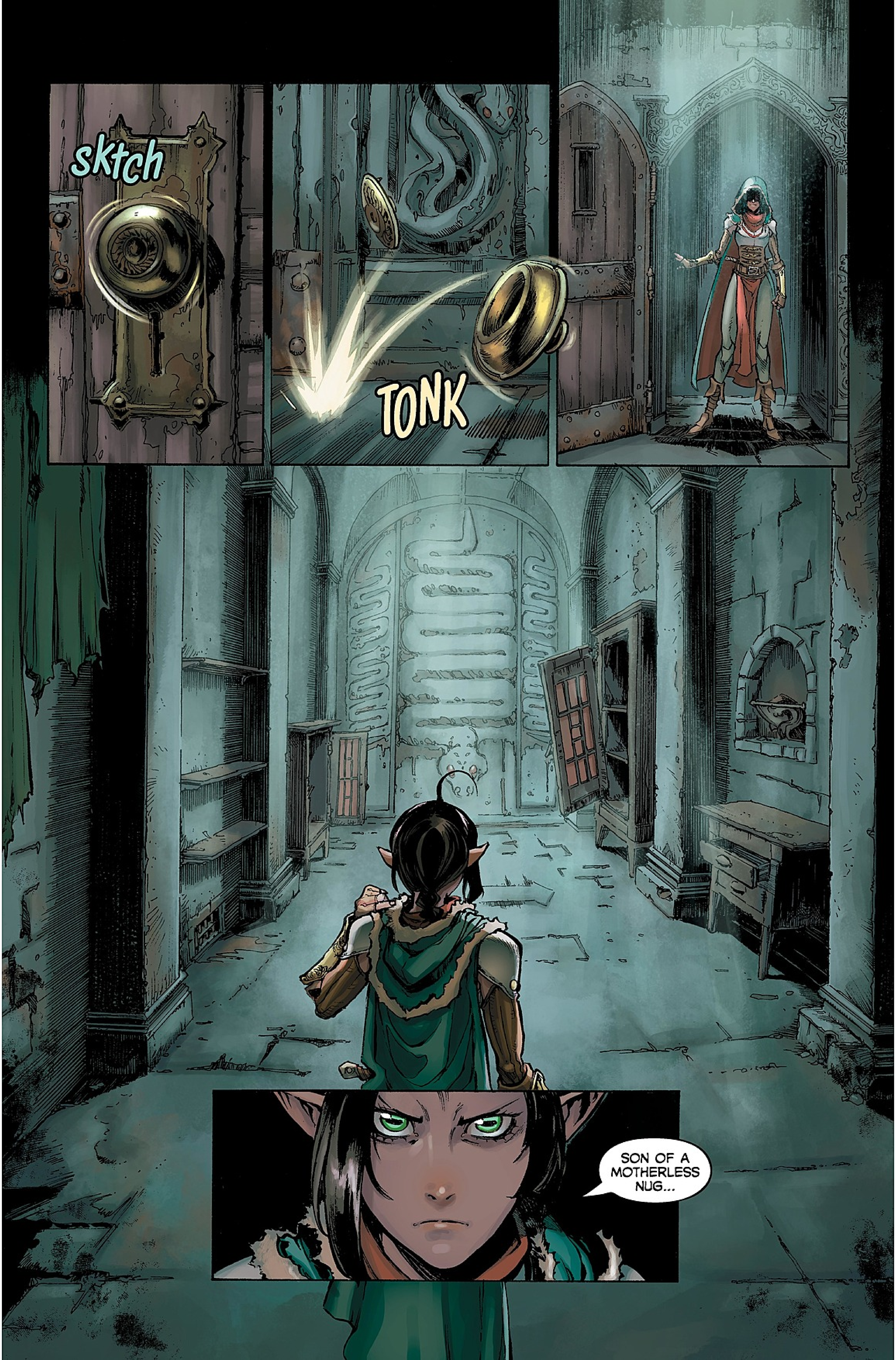

YOU HAVE AN ISSUE WITH YOUR PARTNER.
NOTED.
THIS IS IT. THE QINTARA ESTATE.
ERR... THAT'S THE WRONG BUILDING.
OH, CALIX. DO SHUT UP.
SHE'LL OPEN THE SERVANTS' DOOR ONCE SHE GETS INSIDE.
I'M SORRY. HOUSE QINTARA IS NOT TAKING VISITORS.
I MUST SPEAK TO MAGISTER QINTARA. YOU HAVE *INTRUDERS* IN YOUR ESTATE.

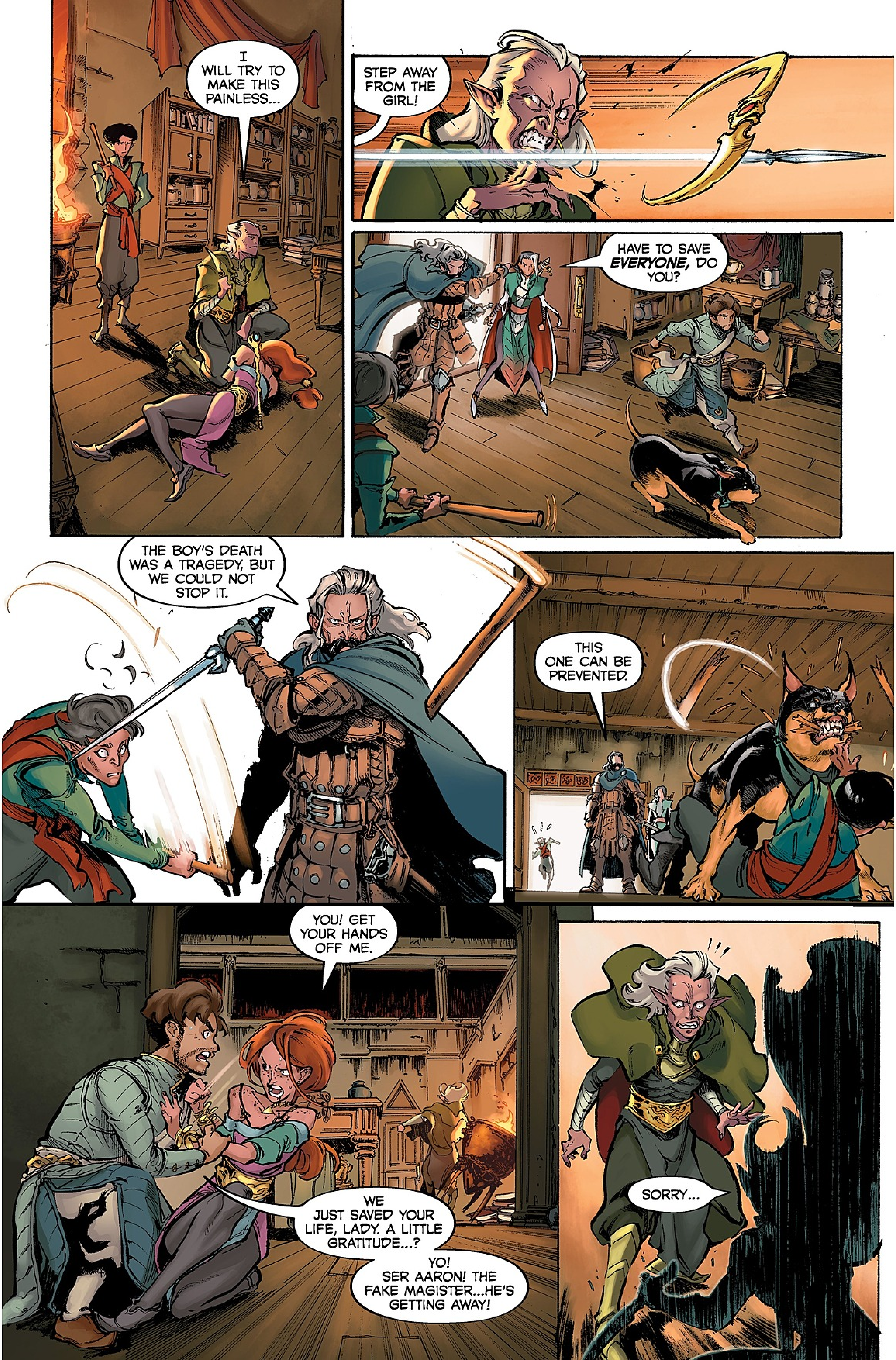

SSSSSSSS
KATHOOM
DAMNATION...
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, SER AARON...

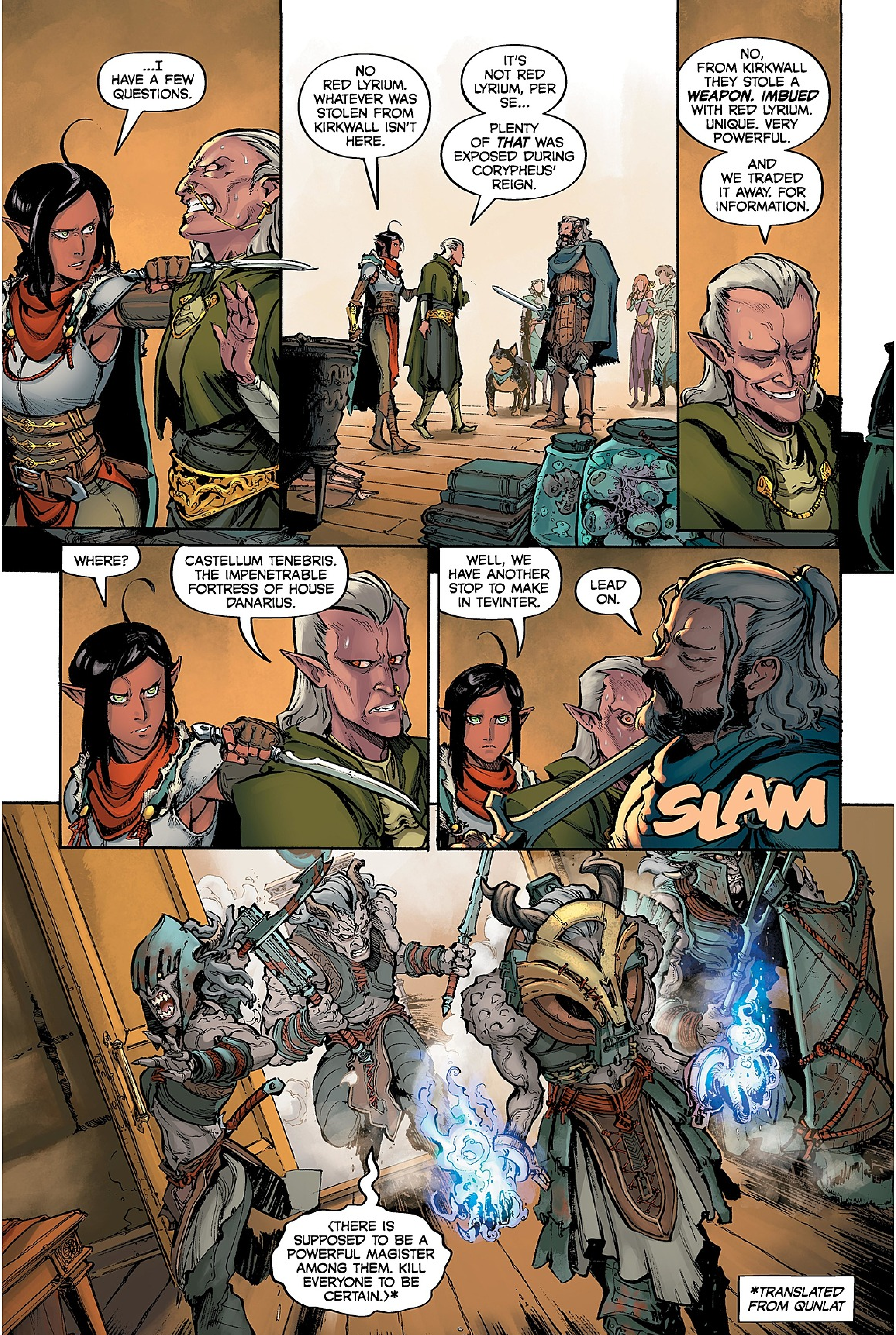

I'LL FIND THE RED LYRIUM. KEEP THE EXIT CLEAR.
AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY.
VAEA--
--BE CAREFUL.
WELL, ***THIS*** ISN'T AWKWARD.
MADAM, WE CAN'T TAKE YOU TO MAGISTER QINTARA.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BROKEN IN...THEY'RE DANGEROUS. THEY KILLED MY BROTHER.
THAT GIRL COULD GET US ALL KILLED.
FLORIAN IS...DEAD?
YOU WERE RIGHT. THOSE PEOPLE WERE DANGEROUS.
I WAS ***WRONG.*** I THOUGHT I COULD TALK THEM INTO DOING IT OUR WAY. BUT THEY'RE NOT "PEOPLE." THEY'RE CROWS.
AND YOU CAN'T ASK PEOPLE TO CHANGE INTO SOMETHING THEY'RE NOT.

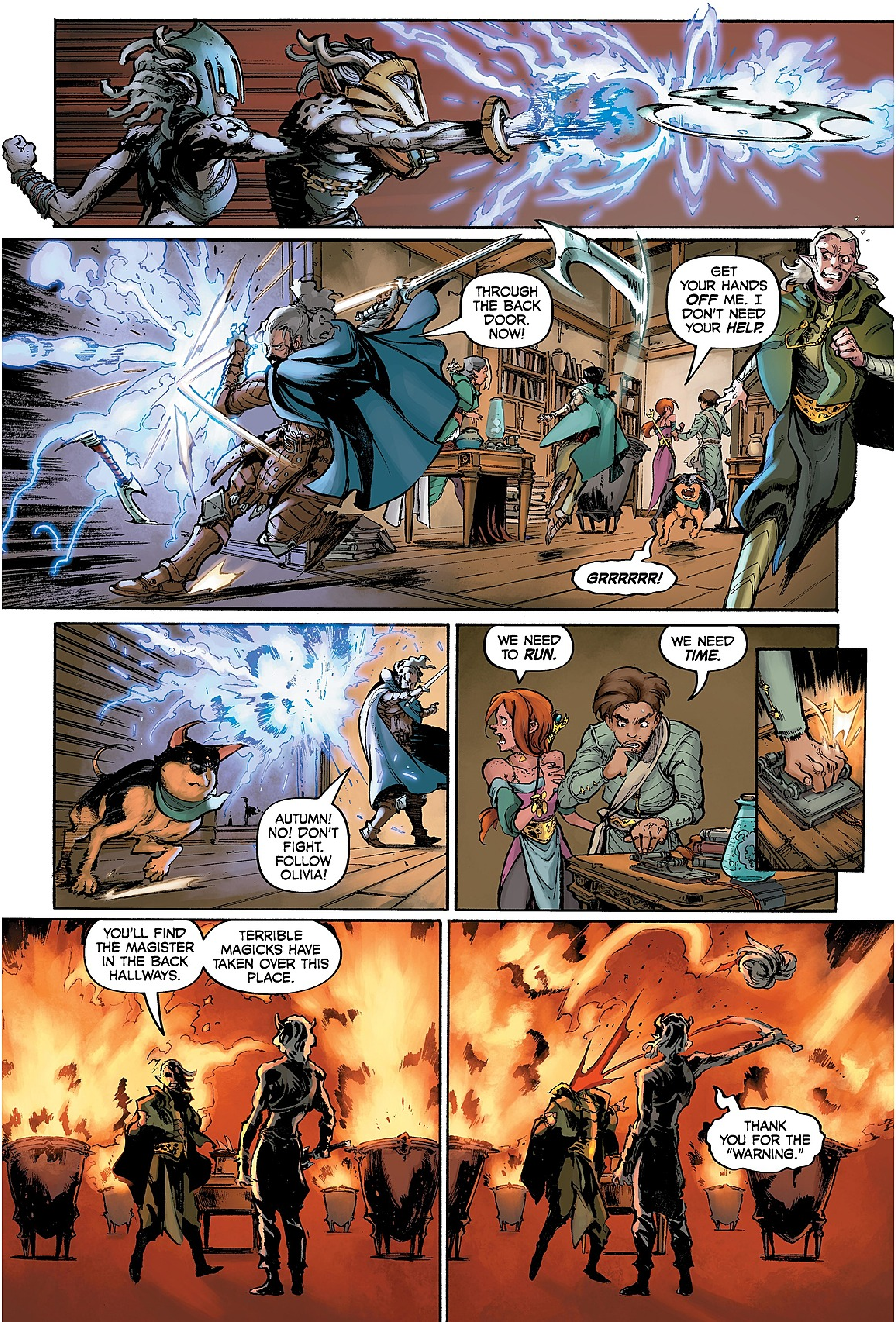

MADAM, I MUST INSIST THAT YOU--
I AM LADY FRANCESCA, SCION OF HOUSE INVIDUS. YOU WILL *INSIST* NOTHING OF ME.
MAGISTER QINTARA HASN'T HAD GUESTS--
IN YEARS, I KNOW. BUT I *MUST* SPEAK WITH HIM. EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
LET HER ENTER, AGOSTO.
MAGISTER QINTARA...
YOU INTERRUPT MY MAGICAL STUDIES, *CHILD.*
NOW, *LEAVE* BEFORE IT GETS YOU *KILLED.*
NO, WAIT!
I JUST WANT TO...
WHAT? HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

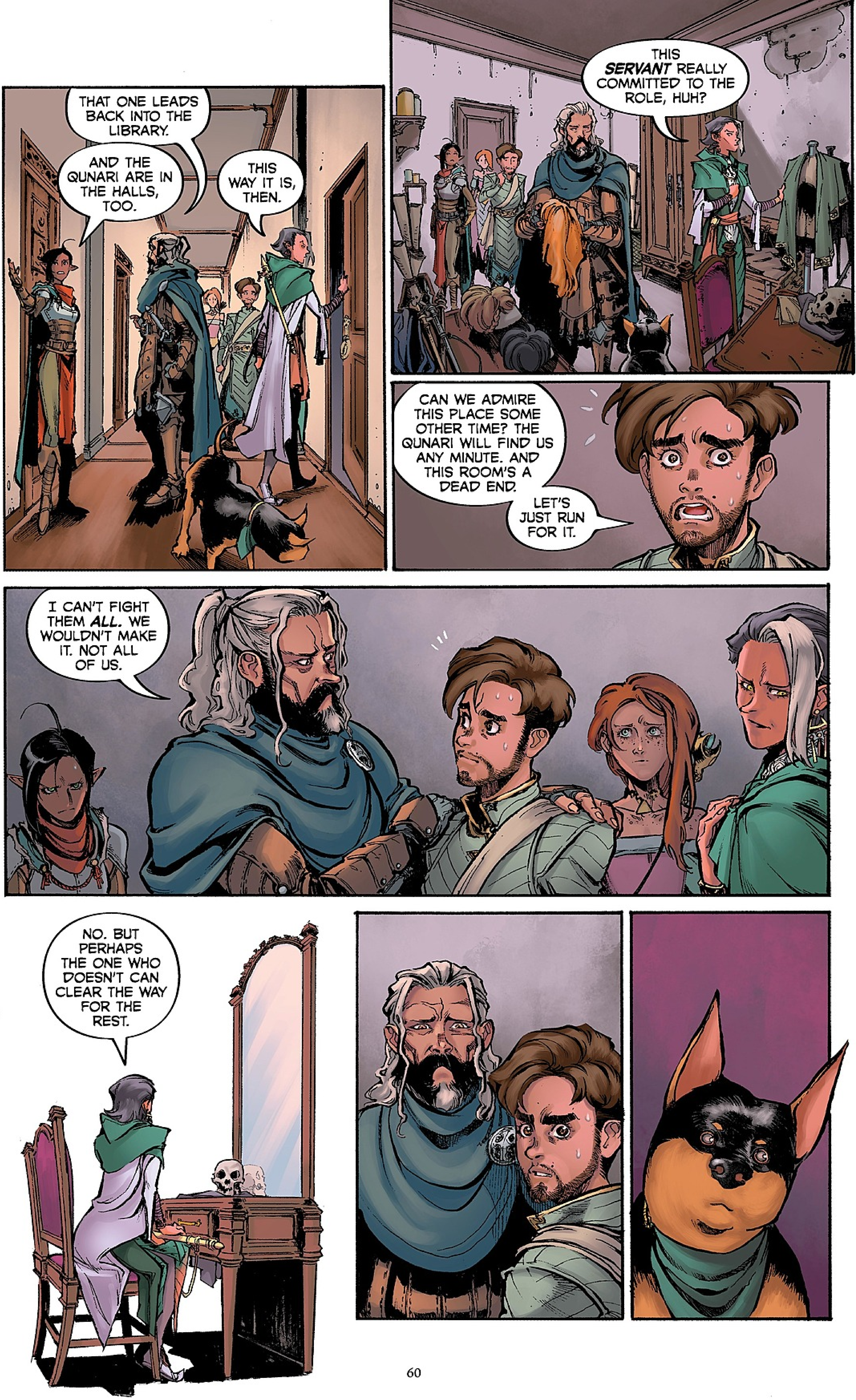

AN ELF? YOU'RE AN-- AN *IMPOSTER.*
MAGISTER QINTARA *DIED* LONG AGO AND HAD *NO* HEIRS. I HAD SERVED AS HIS VALET FOR DECADES.
THE LAST FEW YEARS, HE WAS A HERMIT AND HIS PERSONAL LIFE HAD ALWAYS BEEN A *MYSTERY.*
IT WAS SIMPLE ENOUGH TO *BECOME* HIM.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN A MAGE. THIS IS--
PYROTECHNICS. LIGHTS UP THE ESTATE AND VISIBLE THROUGH THE WINDOWS.
SO RUMORS OF THE MAGISTER'S EXPERIMENTS WOULD OUTLIVE HIM.
WHY? ARE YOU JUST ANOTHER *THIEF?*
NO, MY CHILD. THE MAGISTER STILL WIELDS INFLUENCE AND RECEIVES IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS.
AND MY TRUE *MASTER* NEEDS ALL THE INFORMATION HE CAN GATHER ABOUT THE SHEMLEN... PARDON ME, THE *HUMAN* WORLD.
SHOOM
click
THUD
MY APOLOGIES, LITTLE SHEM...
...BUT THE SECRET *MUST* BE KEPT.

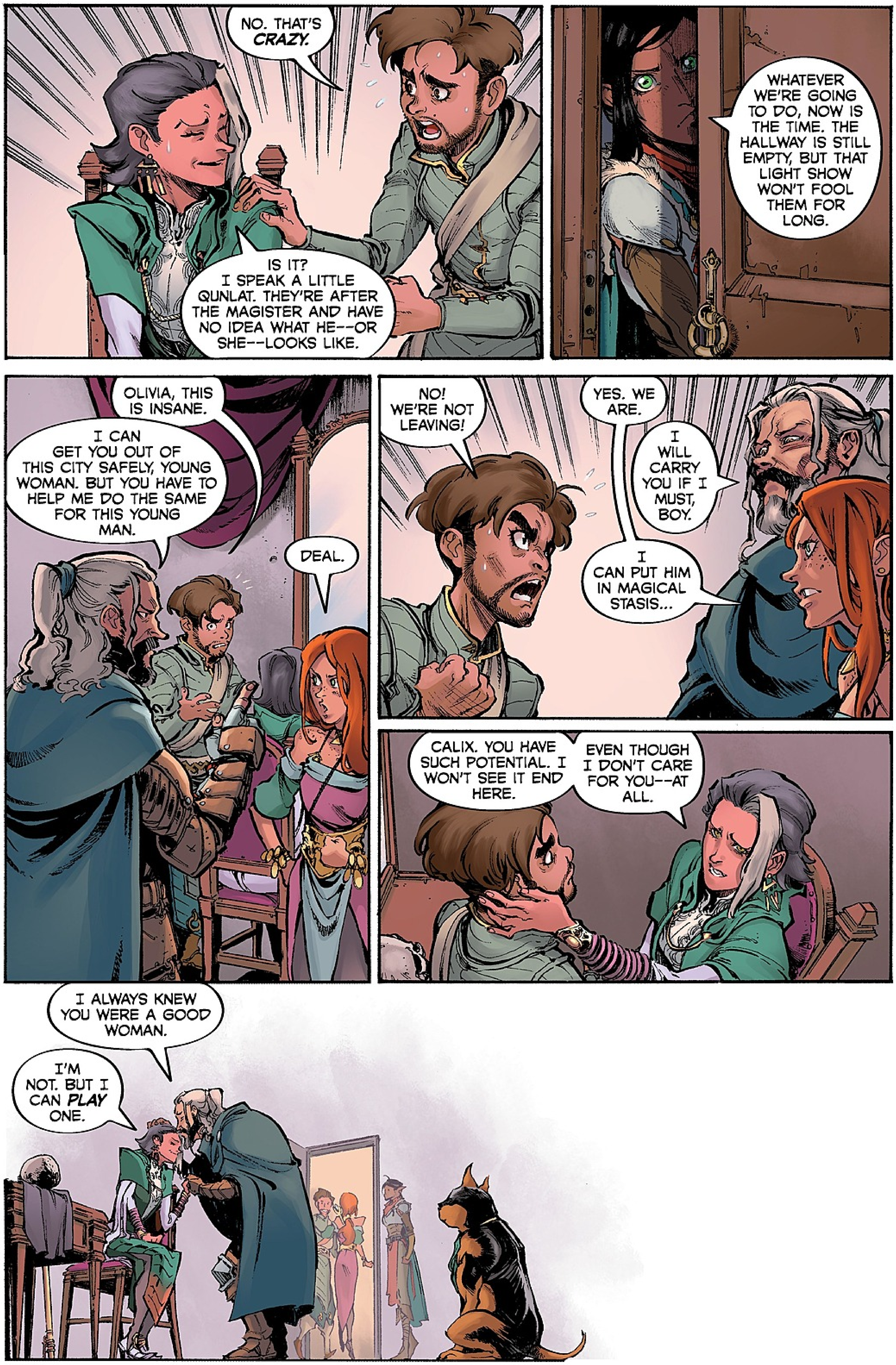

sktch
TONK
SON OF A MOTHERLESS NUG...

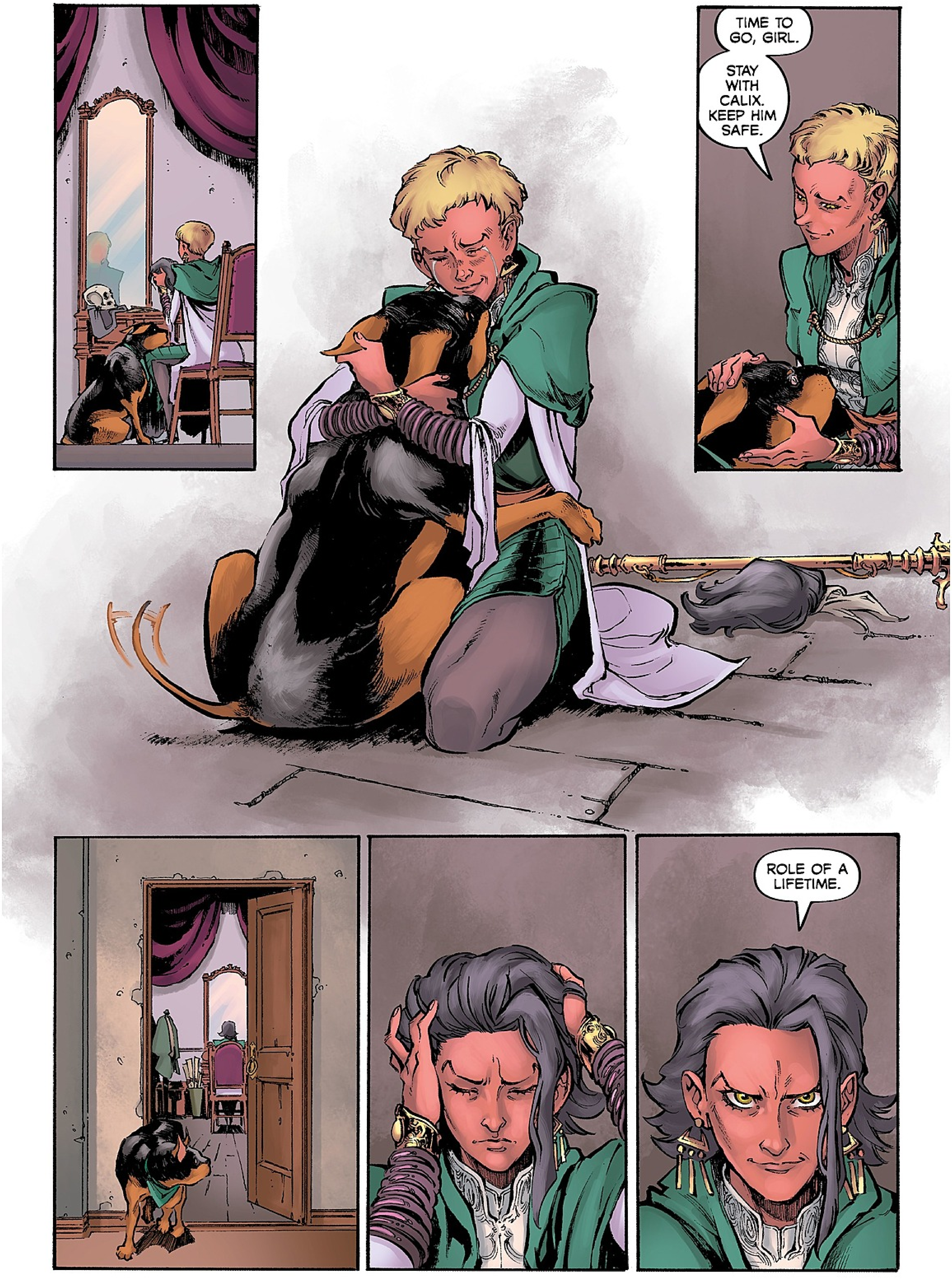

I WILL TRY TO MAKE THIS PAINLESS...
STEP AWAY FROM THE GIRL!
HAVE TO SAVE *EVERYONE,* DO YOU?
THE BOY'S DEATH WAS A TRAGEDY, BUT WE COULD NOT STOP IT.
THIS ONE CAN BE PREVENTED.
YOU! GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME.
WE JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE, LADY. A LITTLE GRATITUDE...?
YO! SER AARON! THE FAKE MAGISTER...HE'S GETTING AWAY!
SORRY...

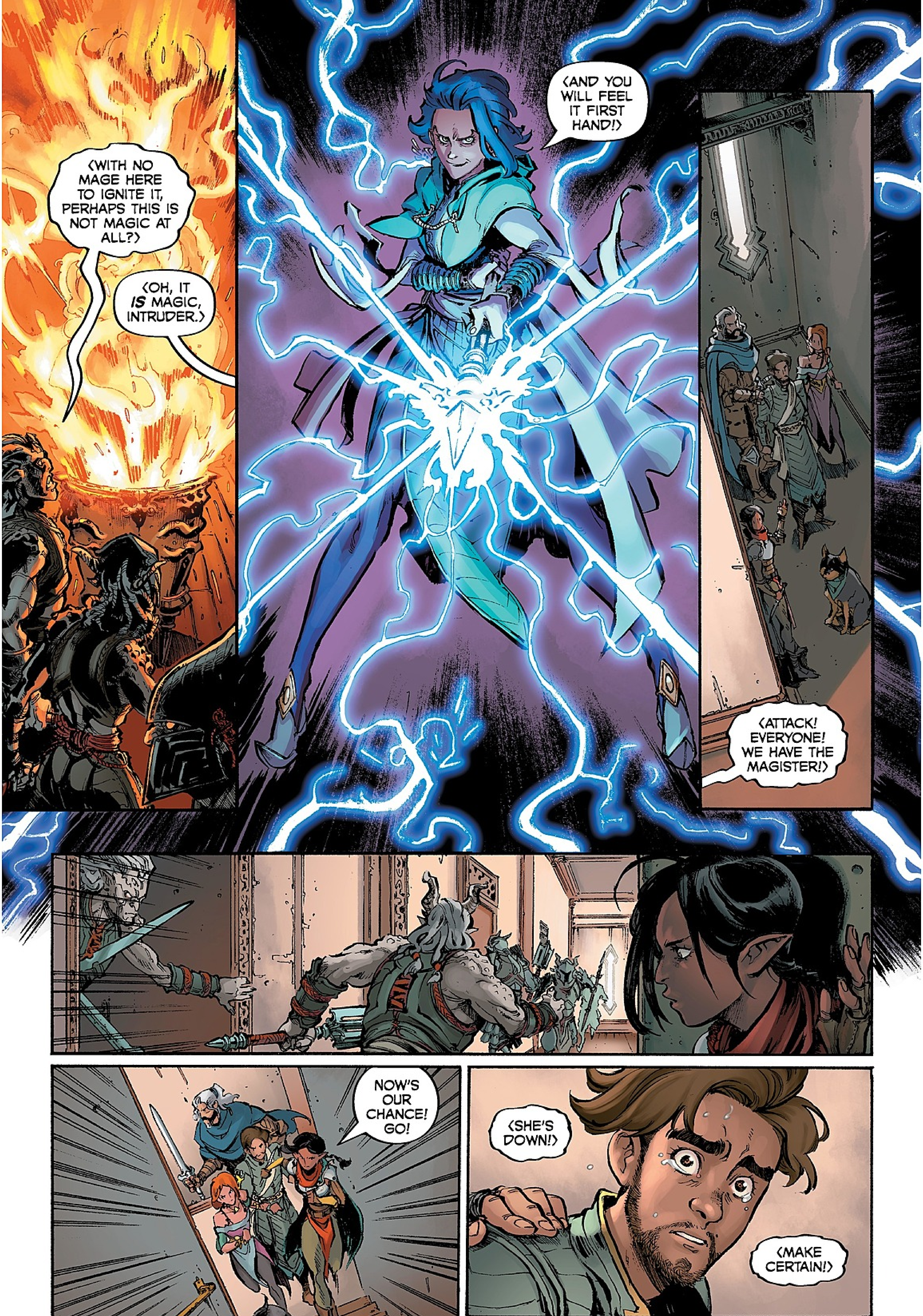

...I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS.
NO RED LYRIUM. WHATEVER WAS STOLEN FROM KIRKWALL ISN'T HERE.
IT'S NOT RED LYRIUM, PER SE...
PLENTY OF *THAT* WAS EXPOSED DURING CORYPHEUS' REIGN.
NO, FROM KIRKWALL THEY STOLE A ***WEAPON. IMBUED*** WITH RED LYRIUM. UNIQUE. VERY POWERFUL.
AND WE TRADED IT AWAY. FOR INFORMATION.
WHERE?
CASTELLUM TENEBRIS. THE IMPENETRABLE FORTRESS OF HOUSE DANARIUS.
WELL, WE HAVE ANOTHER STOP TO MAKE IN TEVINTER.
LEAD ON.
SLAM
‹THERE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A POWERFUL MAGISTER AMONG THEM. KILL EVERYONE TO BE CERTAIN.›*
*TRANSLATED FROM QUNLAT

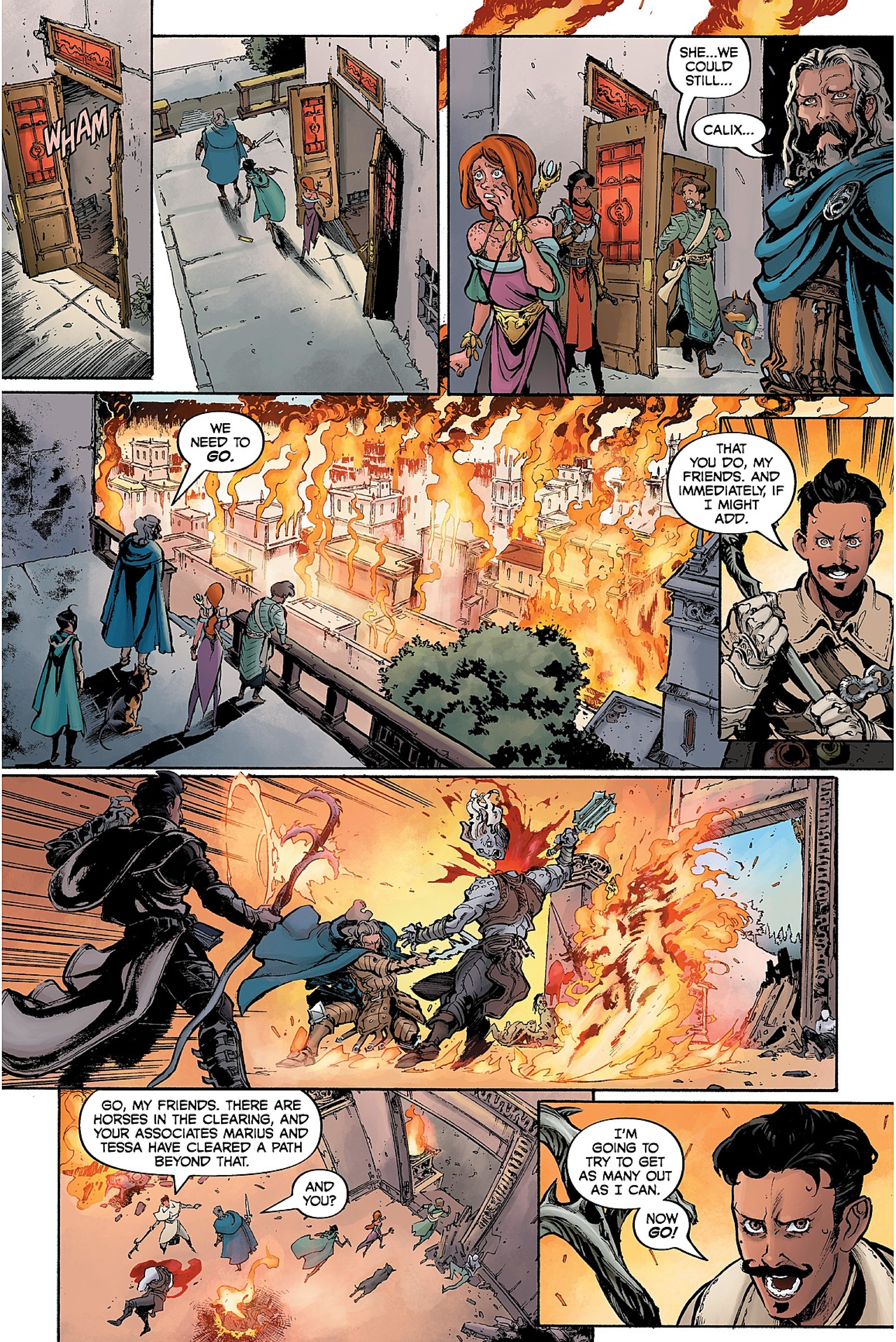

THROUGH THE BACK DOOR. NOW!
GET YOUR HANDS *OFF* ME. I DON'T NEED YOUR *HELP*.
GRRRRRR!
AUTUMN! NO! DON'T FIGHT. FOLLOW OLIVIA!
WE NEED TO *RUN*.
WE NEED *TIME*.
YOU'LL FIND THE MAGISTER IN THE BACK HALLWAYS.
TERRIBLE MAGICKS HAVE TAKEN OVER THIS PLACE.
THANK YOU FOR THE "WARNING."

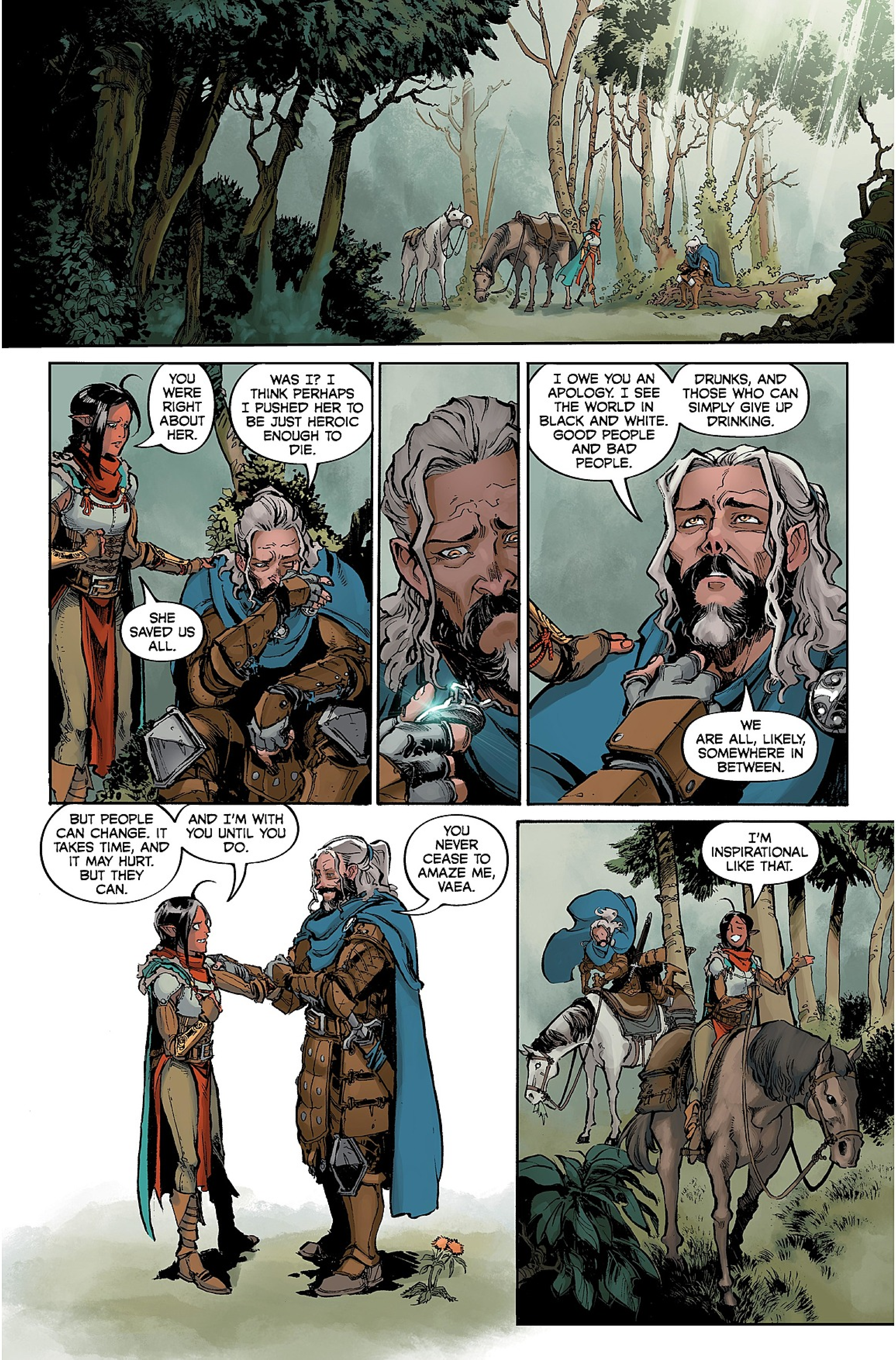

THAT ONE LEADS BACK INTO THE LIBRARY.
AND THE QUNARI ARE IN THE HALLS, TOO.
THIS WAY IT IS, THEN.
THIS *SERVANT* REALLY COMMITTED TO THE ROLE, HUH?
CAN WE ADMIRE THIS PLACE SOME OTHER TIME? THE QUNARI WILL FIND US ANY MINUTE. AND THIS ROOM'S A DEAD END.
LET'S JUST RUN FOR IT.
I CAN'T FIGHT THEM *ALL.* WE WOULDN'T MAKE IT. NOT ALL OF US.
NO. BUT PERHAPS THE ONE WHO DOESN'T CAN CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE REST.


NO. THAT'S *CRAZY.*
IS IT? I SPEAK A LITTLE QUNLAT. THEY'RE AFTER THE MAGISTER AND HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE--OR SHE--LOOKS LIKE.
WHATEVER WE'RE GOING TO DO, NOW IS THE TIME. THE HALLWAY IS STILL EMPTY, BUT THAT LIGHT SHOW WON'T FOOL THEM FOR LONG.
OLIVIA, THIS IS INSANE.
I CAN GET YOU OUT OF THIS CITY SAFELY, YOUNG WOMAN. BUT YOU HAVE TO HELP ME DO THE SAME FOR THIS YOUNG MAN.
DEAL.
NO! WE'RE NOT LEAVING!
YES. WE ARE.
I WILL CARRY YOU IF I MUST, BOY.
I CAN PUT HIM IN MAGICAL STASIS...
CALIX. YOU HAVE SUCH POTENTIAL. I WON'T SEE IT END HERE.
EVEN THOUGH I DON'T CARE FOR YOU--AT ALL.
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE A GOOD WOMAN.
I'M NOT. BUT I CAN *PLAY* ONE.


TIME TO GO, GIRL.
STAY WITH CALIX. KEEP HIM SAFE.
ROLE OF A LIFETIME.


<WITH NO MAGE HERE TO IGNITE IT, PERHAPS THIS IS NOT MAGIC AT ALL?>
<OH, IT *IS* MAGIC, INTRUDER.>
<AND YOU WILL FEEL IT FIRST HAND!>
<ATTACK! EVERYONE! WE HAVE THE MAGISTER!>
NOW'S OUR CHANCE! GO!
<SHE'S DOWN!>
<MAKE CERTAIN!>


WHAM
SHE...WE COULD STILL...
CALIX...
WE NEED TO ***GO.***
THAT YOU DO, MY FRIENDS. AND IMMEDIATELY, IF I MIGHT ADD.
GO, MY FRIENDS. THERE ARE HORSES IN THE CLEARING, AND YOUR ASSOCIATES MARIUS AND TESSA HAVE CLEARED A PATH BEYOND THAT.
AND YOU?
I'M GOING TO TRY TO GET AS MANY OUT AS I CAN.
NOW ***GO!***


YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HER.
WAS I? I THINK PERHAPS I PUSHED HER TO BE JUST HEROIC ENOUGH TO DIE.
SHE SAVED US ALL.
I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY. I SEE THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE. GOOD PEOPLE AND BAD PEOPLE.
DRUNKS, AND THOSE WHO CAN SIMPLY GIVE UP DRINKING.
WE ARE ALL, LIKELY, SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.
BUT PEOPLE CAN CHANGE. IT TAKES TIME, AND IT MAY HURT. BUT THEY CAN.
AND I'M WITH YOU UNTIL YOU DO.
YOU NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE ME, VAEA.
I'M INSPIRATIONAL LIKE THAT.

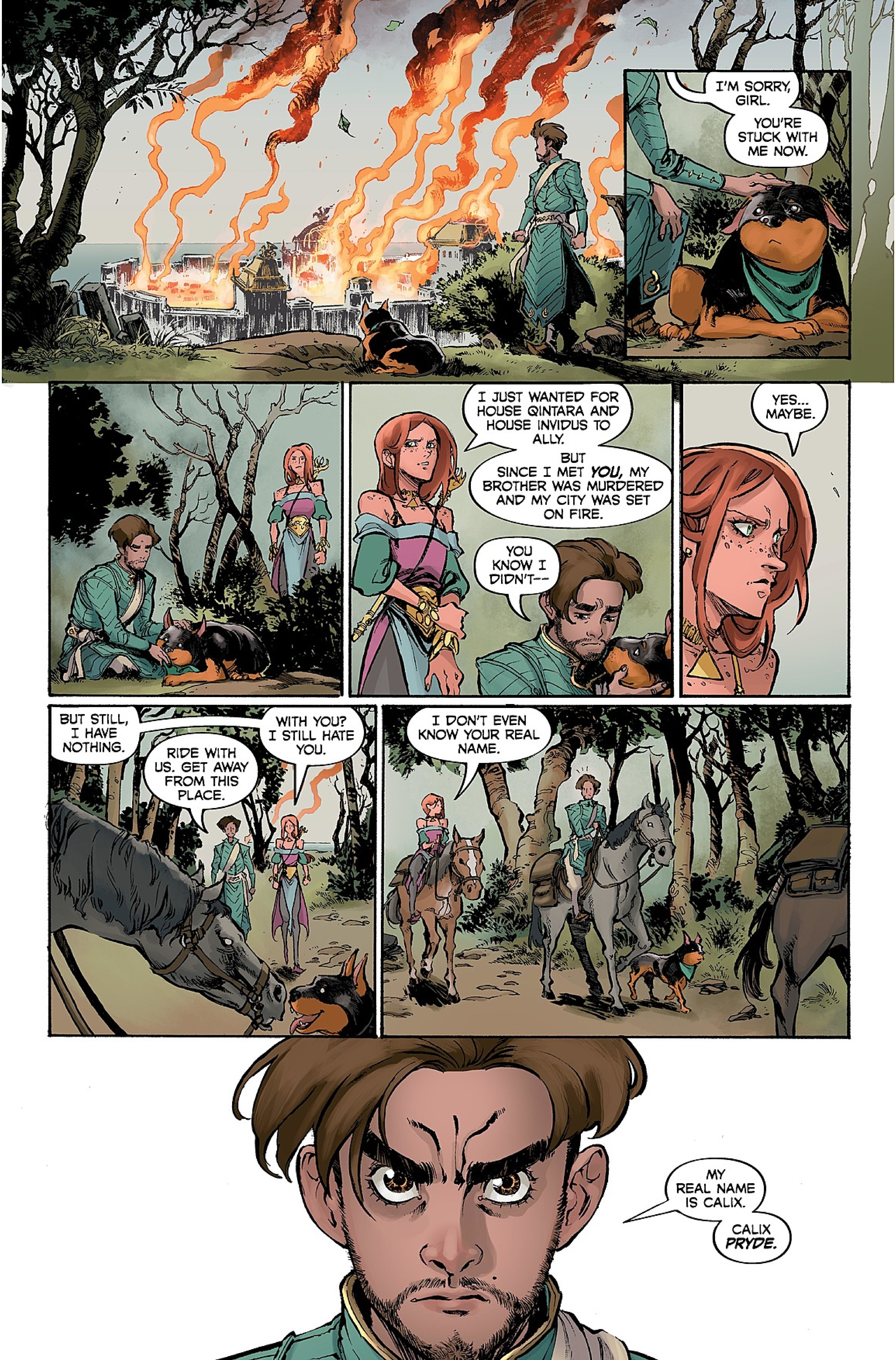
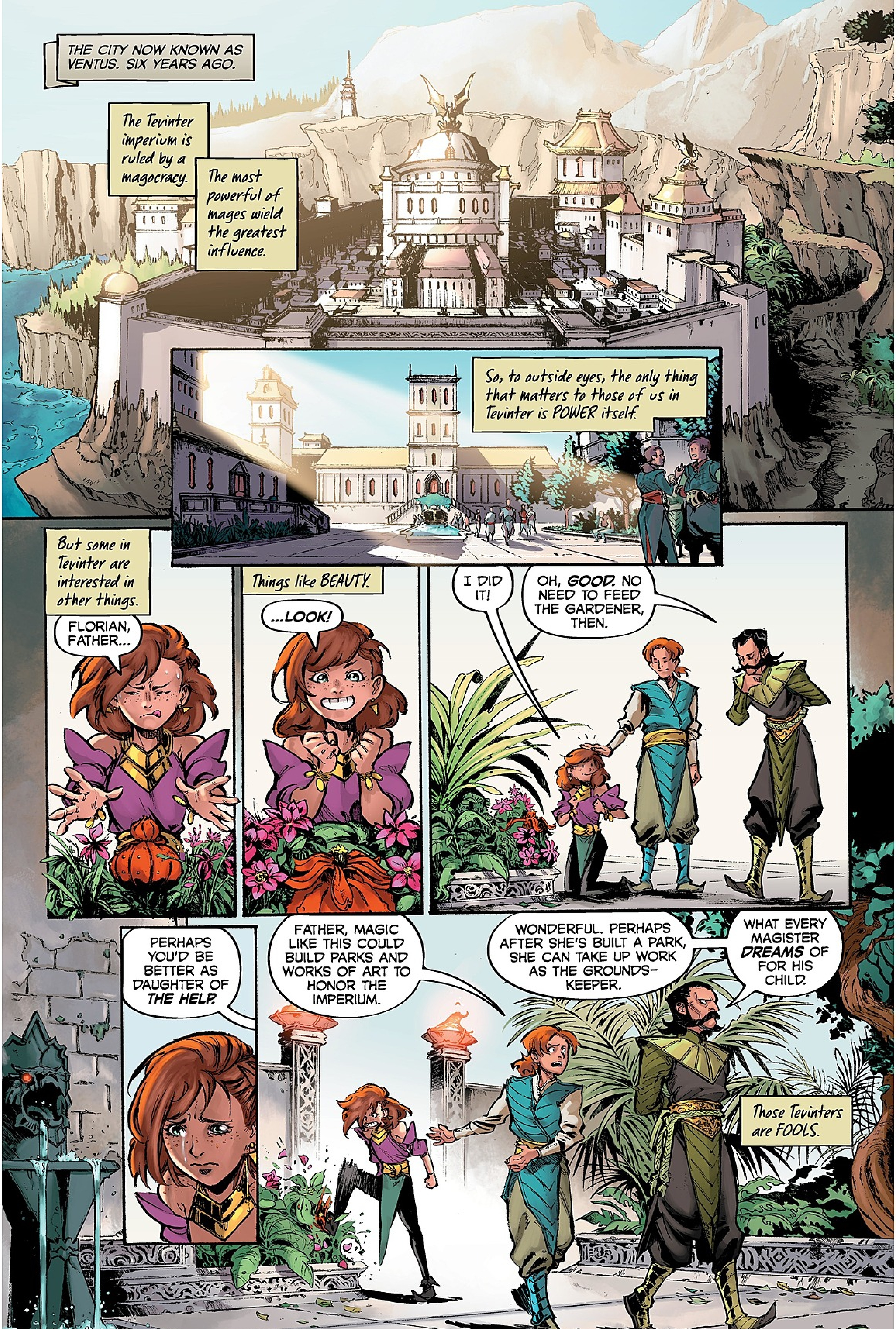
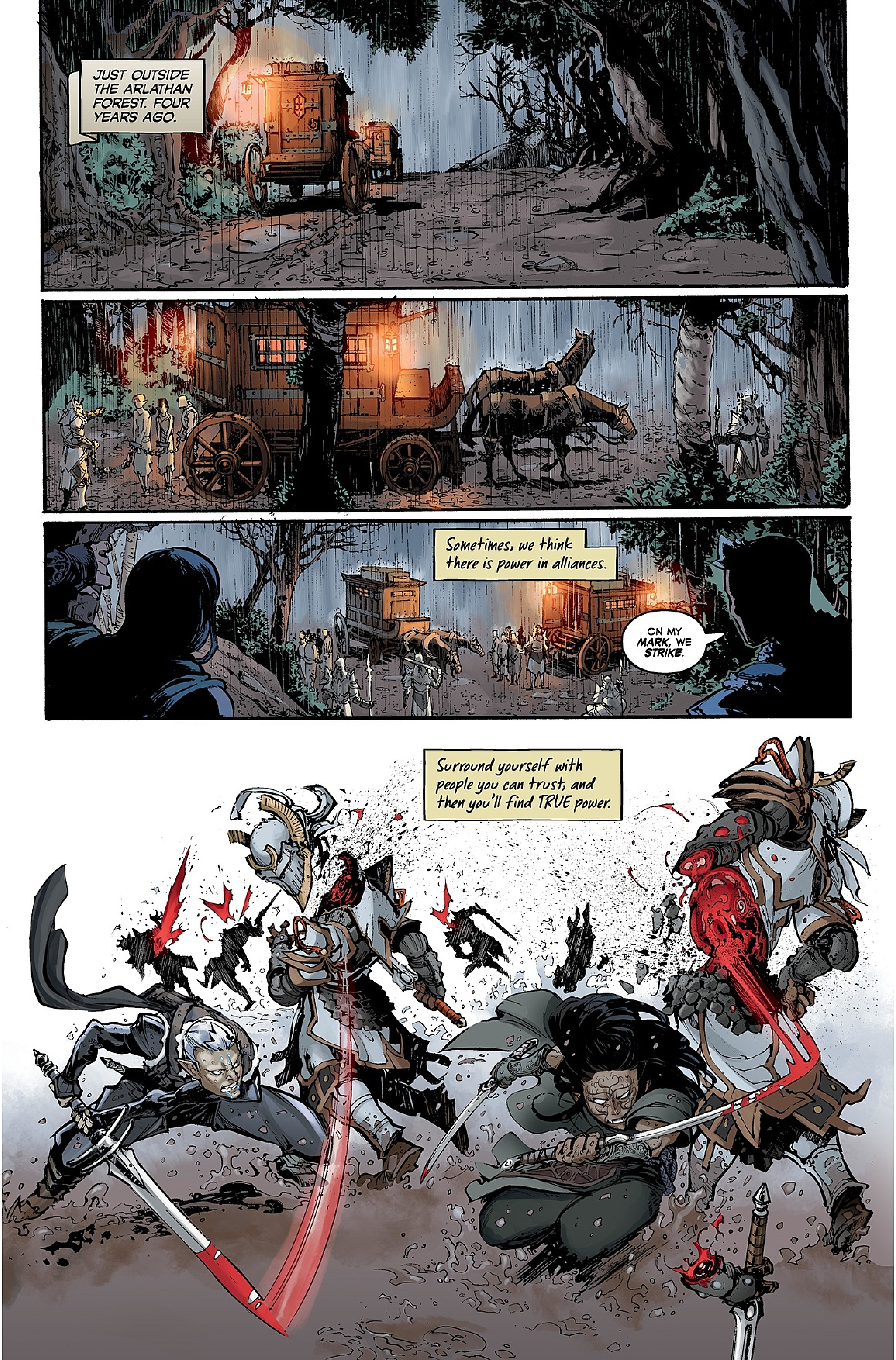
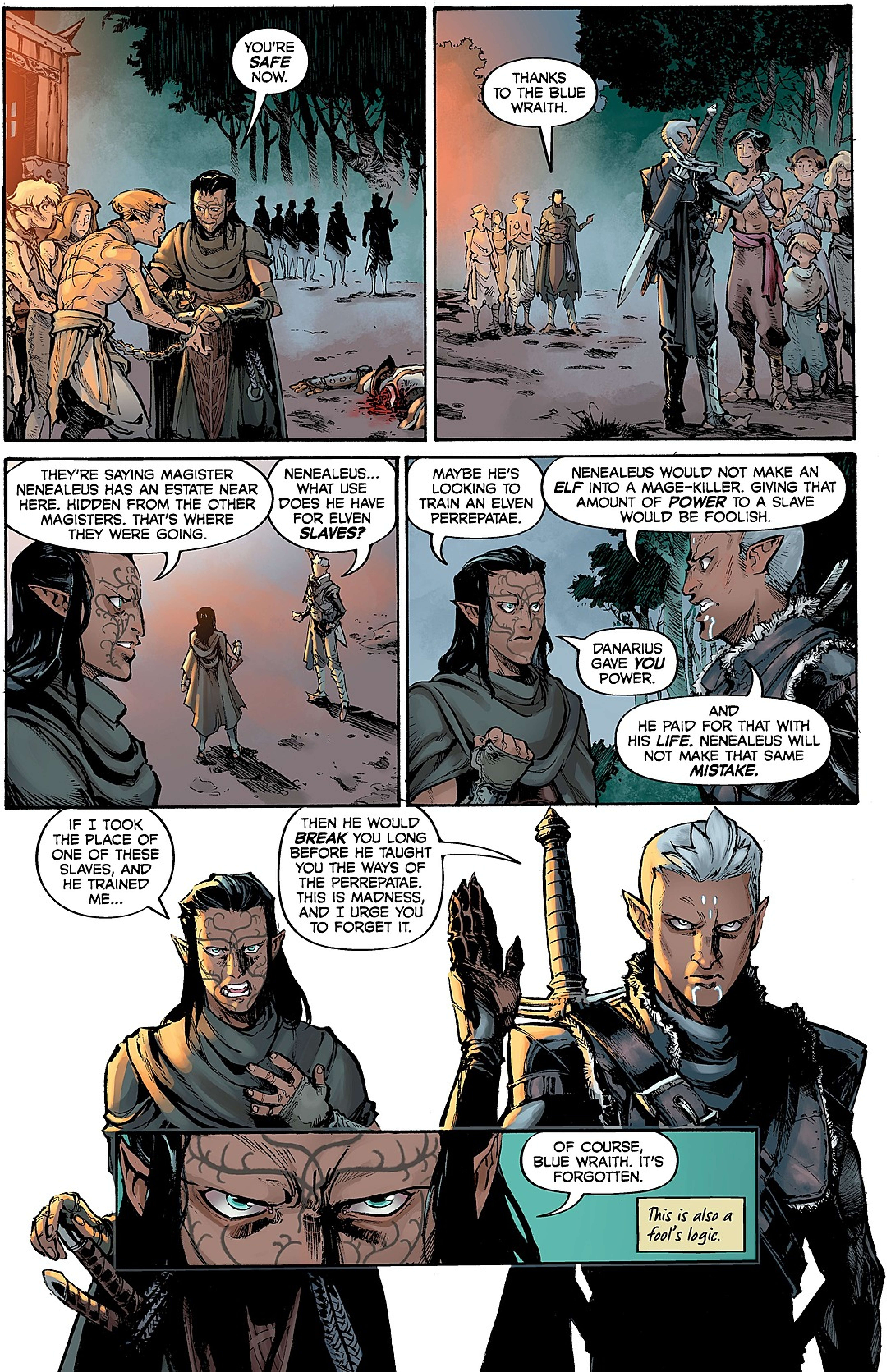

I'M SORRY, GIRL.
YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME NOW.
I JUST WANTED FOR HOUSE QINTARA AND HOUSE INVIDUS TO ALLY.
BUT SINCE I MET *YOU,* MY BROTHER WAS MURDERED AND MY CITY WAS SET ON FIRE.
YOU KNOW I DIDN'T--
YES... MAYBE.
BUT STILL, I HAVE NOTHING.
RIDE WITH US. GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE.
WITH YOU? I STILL HATE YOU.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR REAL NAME.
MY REAL NAME IS CALIX.
CALIX ***PRYDE.***

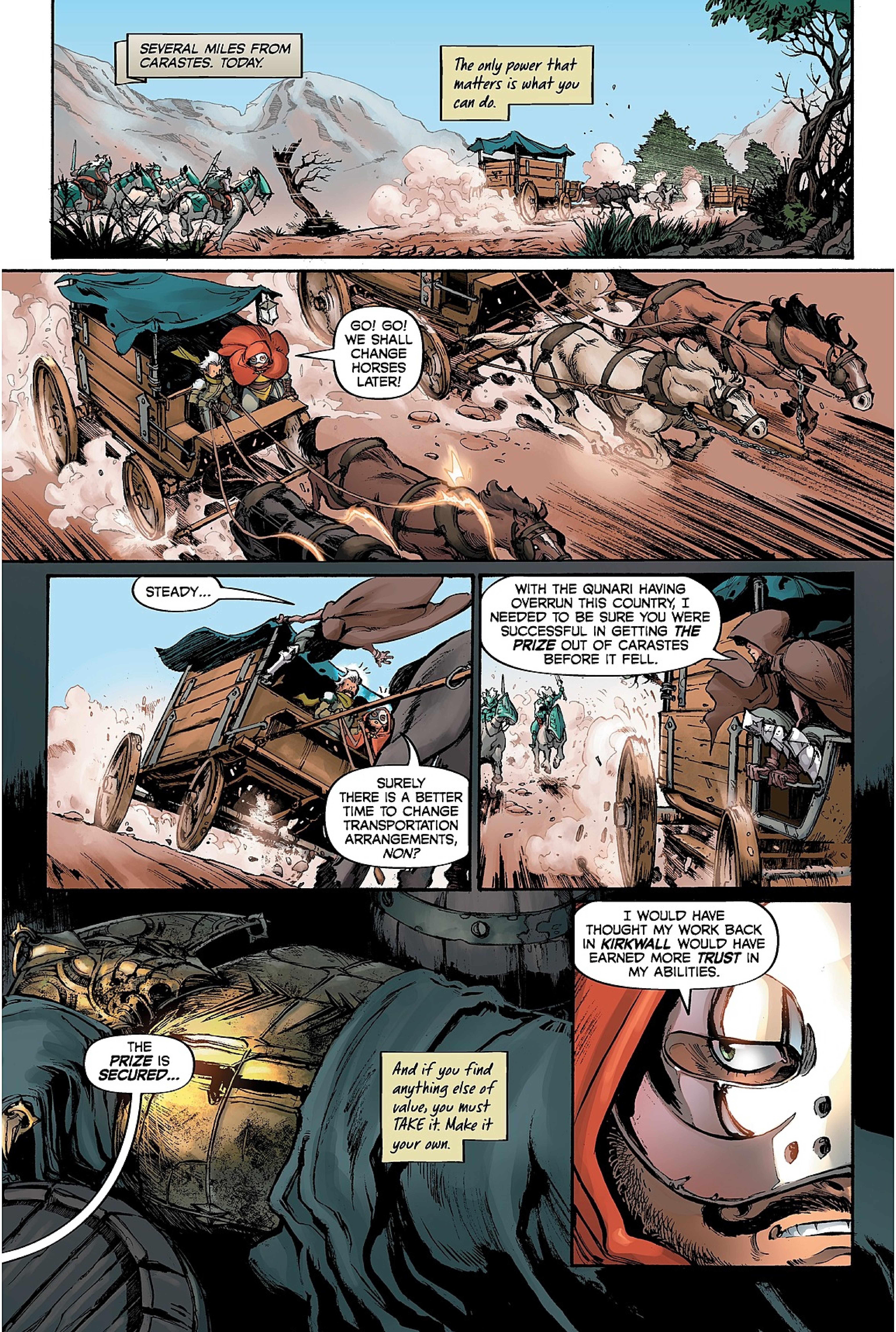
Illustration by Sachin Teng

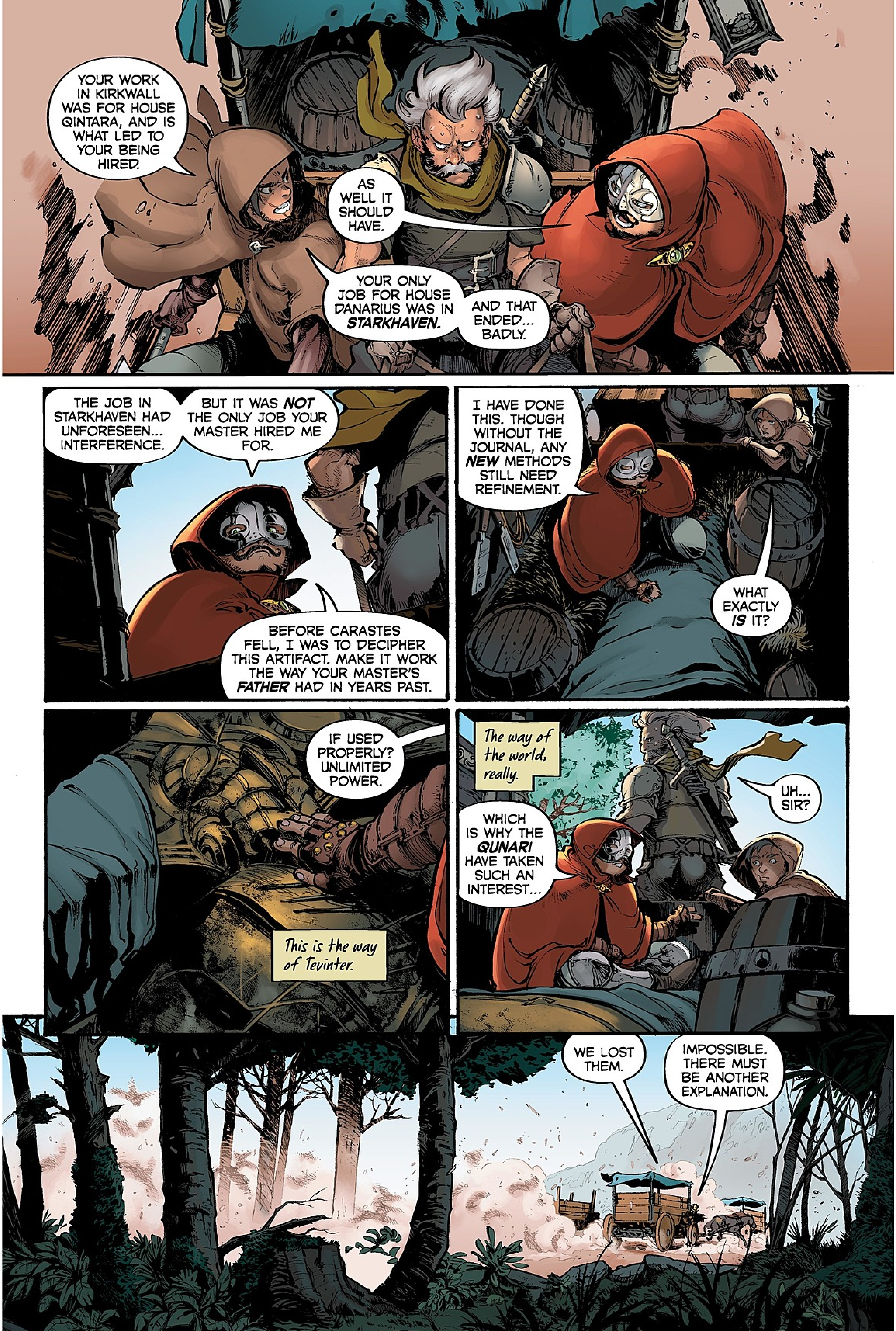
BLUE WRAITH

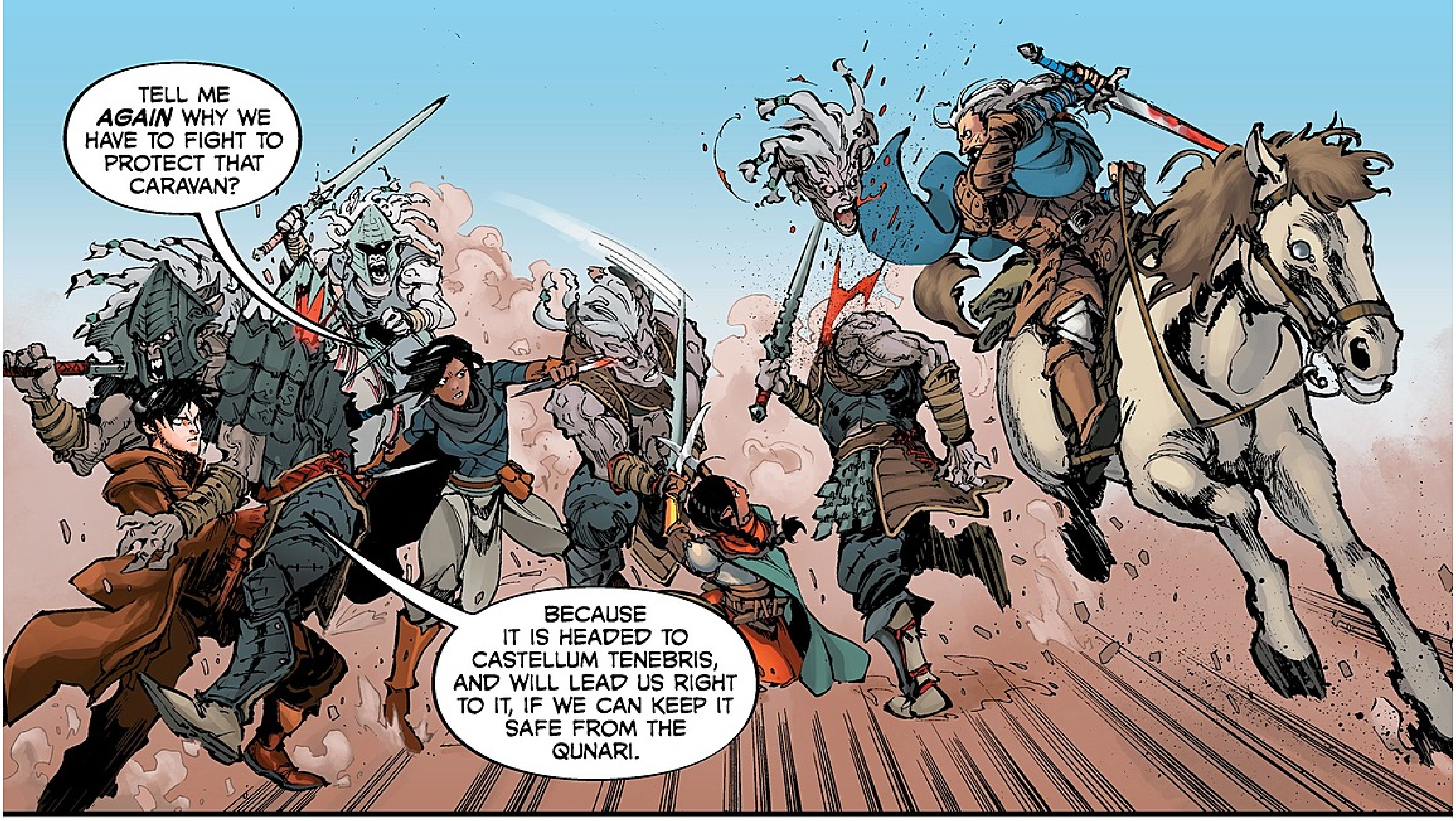

THE CITY NOW KNOWN AS VENTUS. SIX YEARS AGO.
The Tevinter imperium is ruled by a magocracy.
The most powerful of mages wield the greatest influence.
So, to outside eyes, the only thing that matters to those of us in Tevinter is POWER itself.
But some in Tevinter are interested in other things.
FLORIAN, FATHER...
Things like BEAUTY.
...LOOK!
I DID IT!
OH, GOOD. NO NEED TO FEED THE GARDENER, THEN.
PERHAPS YOU'D BE BETTER AS DAUGHTER OF THE HELP.
FATHER, MAGIC LIKE THIS COULD BUILD PARKS AND WORKS OF ART TO HONOR THE IMPERIUM.
WONDERFUL. PERHAPS AFTER SHE'S BUILT A PARK, SHE CAN TAKE UP WORK AS THE GROUNDS-KEEPER.
WHAT EVERY MAGISTER DREAMS OF FOR HIS CHILD.
Those Tevinters are FOOLS.

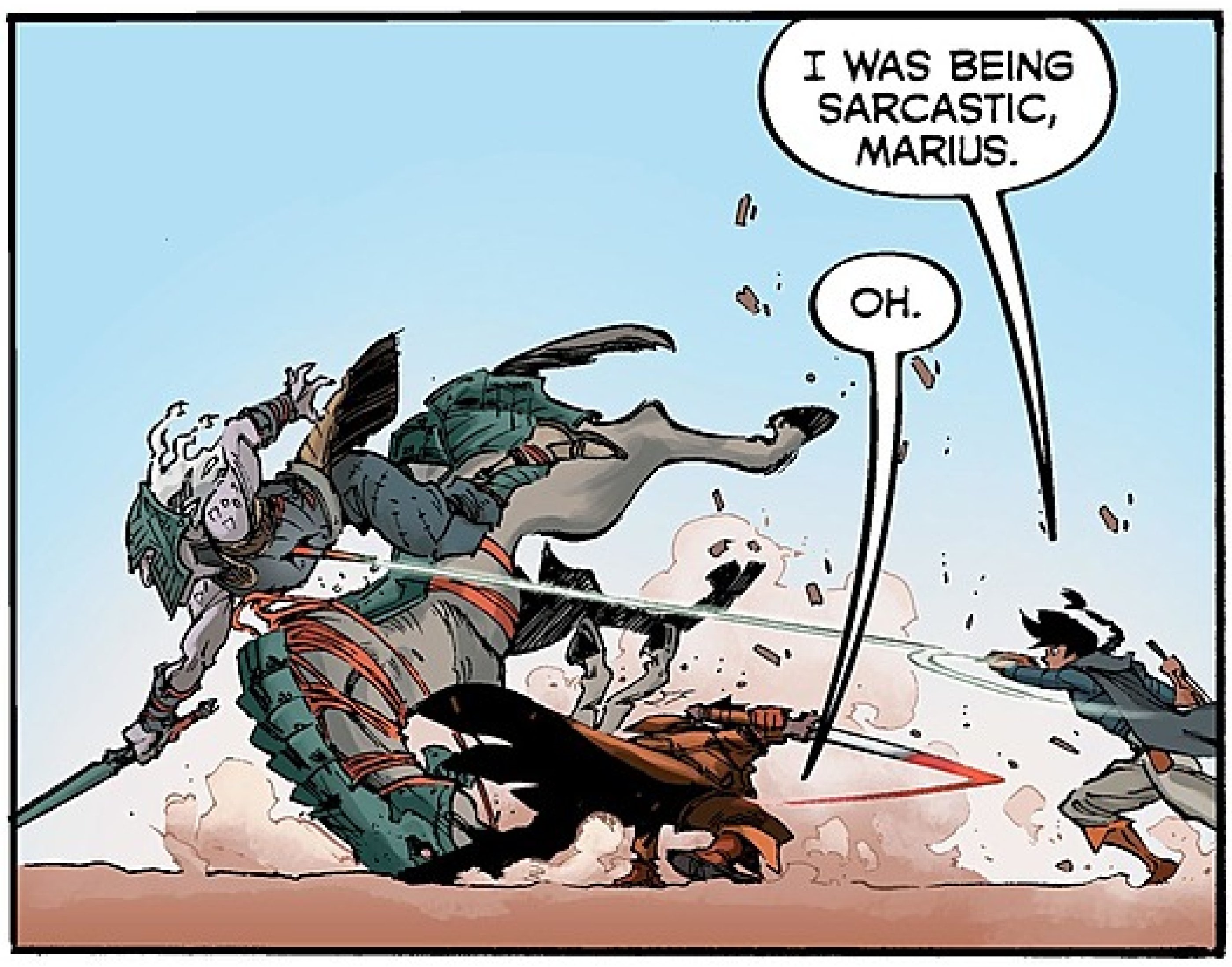

JUST OUTSIDE THE ARLATHAN FOREST. FOUR YEARS AGO.
Sometimes, we think there is power in alliances.
ON MY MARK, WE STRIKE.
Surround yourself with people you can trust, and then you'll find TRUE power.

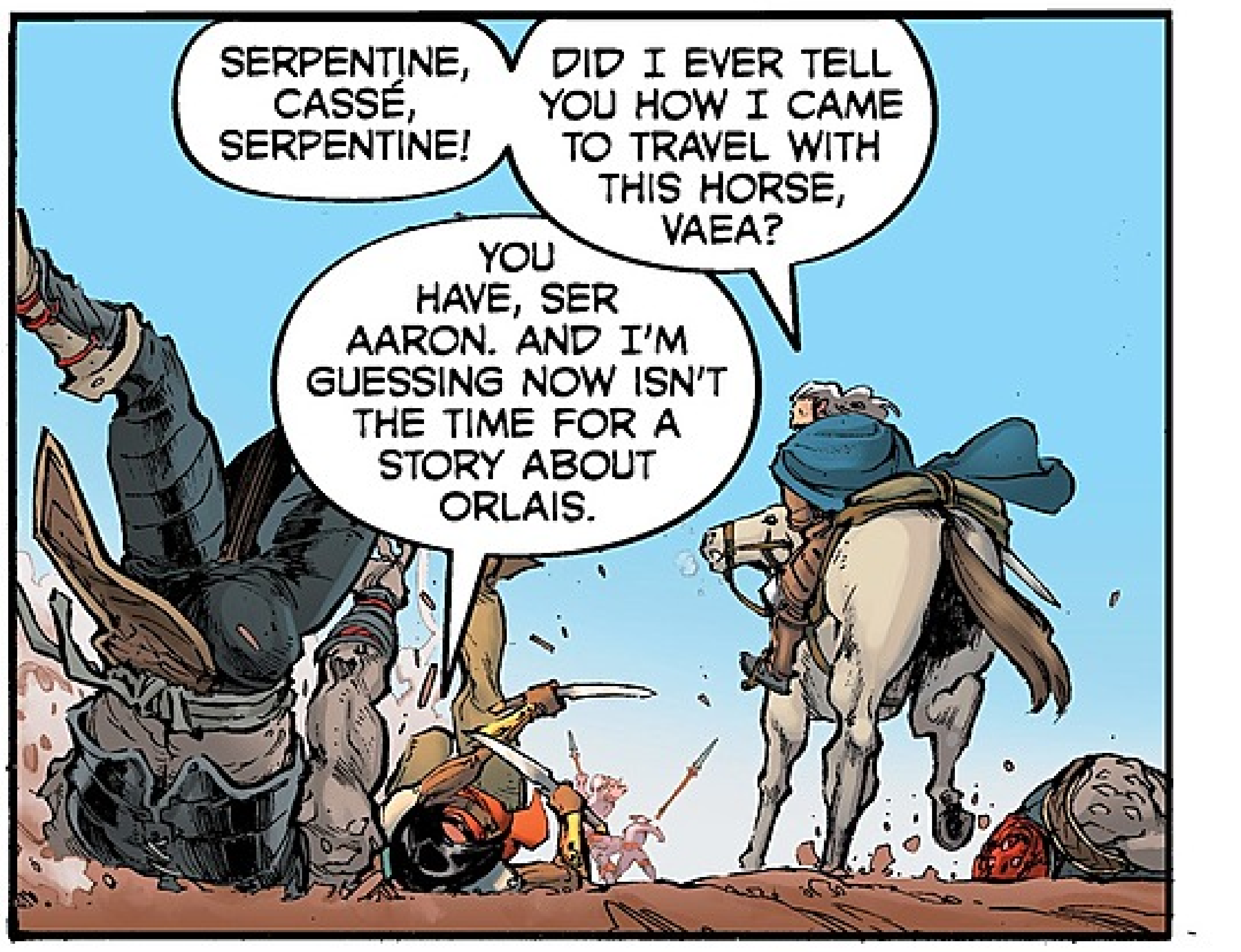

YOU'RE *SAFE* NOW.
THANKS TO THE BLUE WRAITH.
THEY'RE SAYING MAGISTER NENEALEUS HAS AN ESTATE NEAR HERE. HIDDEN FROM THE OTHER MAGISTERS. THAT'S WHERE THEY WERE GOING.
NENEALEUS... WHAT USE DOES HE HAVE FOR ELVEN *SLAVES?*
MAYBE HE'S LOOKING TO TRAIN AN ELVEN PERREPATAE.
NENEALEUS WOULD NOT MAKE AN *ELF* INTO A MAGE-KILLER. GIVING THAT AMOUNT OF *POWER* TO A SLAVE WOULD BE FOOLISH.
DANARIUS GAVE *YOU* POWER.
AND HE PAID FOR THAT WITH HIS *LIFE.* NENEALEUS WILL NOT MAKE THAT SAME *MISTAKE.*
IF I TOOK THE PLACE OF ONE OF THESE SLAVES, AND HE TRAINED ME...
THEN HE WOULD *BREAK* YOU LONG BEFORE HE TAUGHT YOU THE WAYS OF THE PERREPATAE. THIS IS MADNESS, AND I URGE YOU TO FORGET IT.
OF COURSE, BLUE WRAITH. IT'S FORGOTTEN.
This is also a fool's logic.

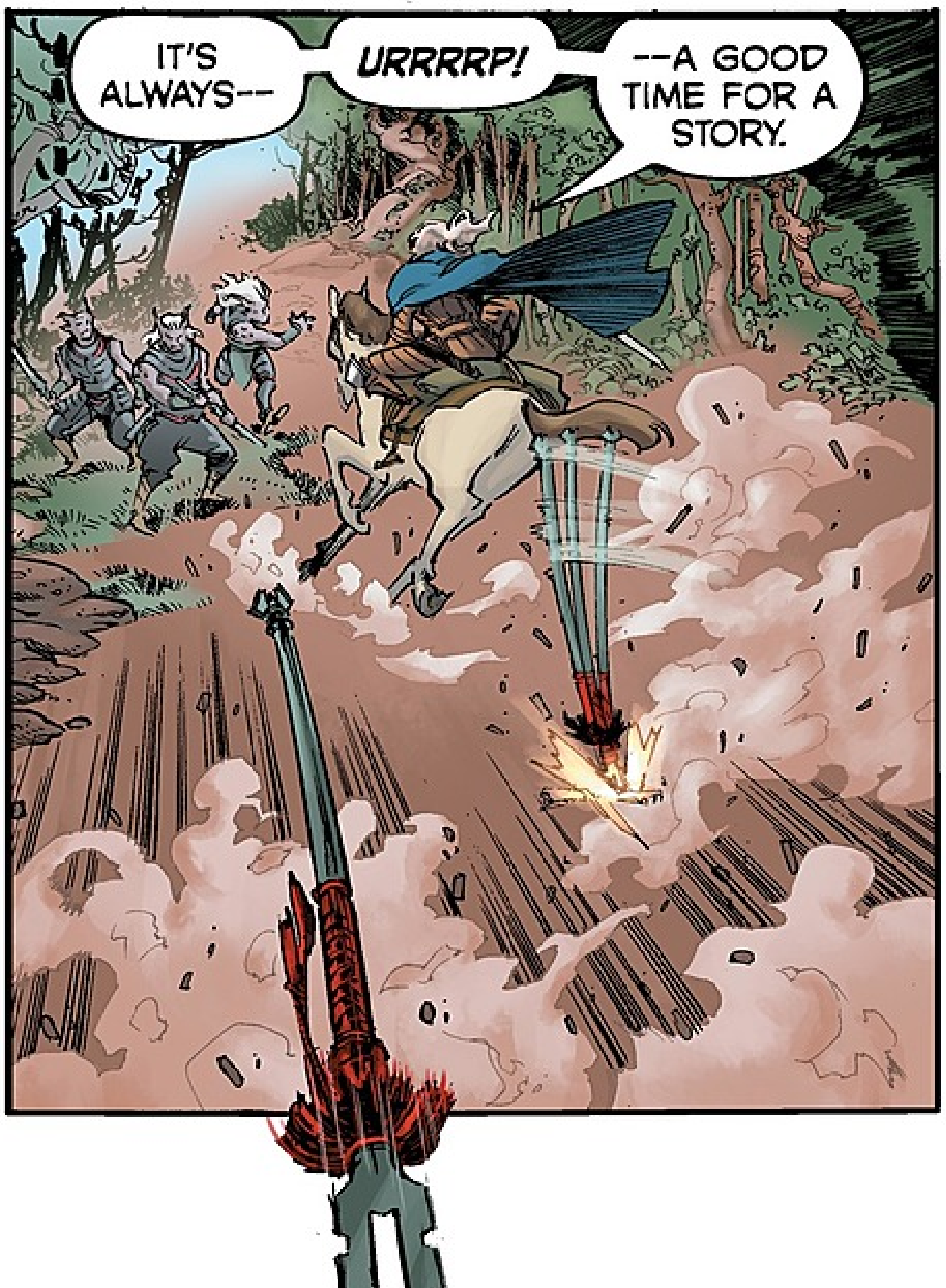

SEVERAL MILES FROM CARASTES. TODAY.
The only power that matters is what you can do.
GO! GO! WE SHALL CHANGE HORSES LATER!
STEADY...
SURELY THERE IS A BETTER TIME TO CHANGE TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS, *NON?*
WITH THE QUNARI HAVING OVERRUN THIS COUNTRY, I NEEDED TO BE SURE YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING ***THE PRIZE*** OUT OF CARASTES BEFORE IT FELL.
THE ***PRIZE*** IS ***SECURED...***
And if you find anything else of value, you must TAKE it. Make it your own.
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT MY WORK BACK IN ***KIRKWALL*** WOULD HAVE EARNED MORE ***TRUST*** IN MY ABILITIES.

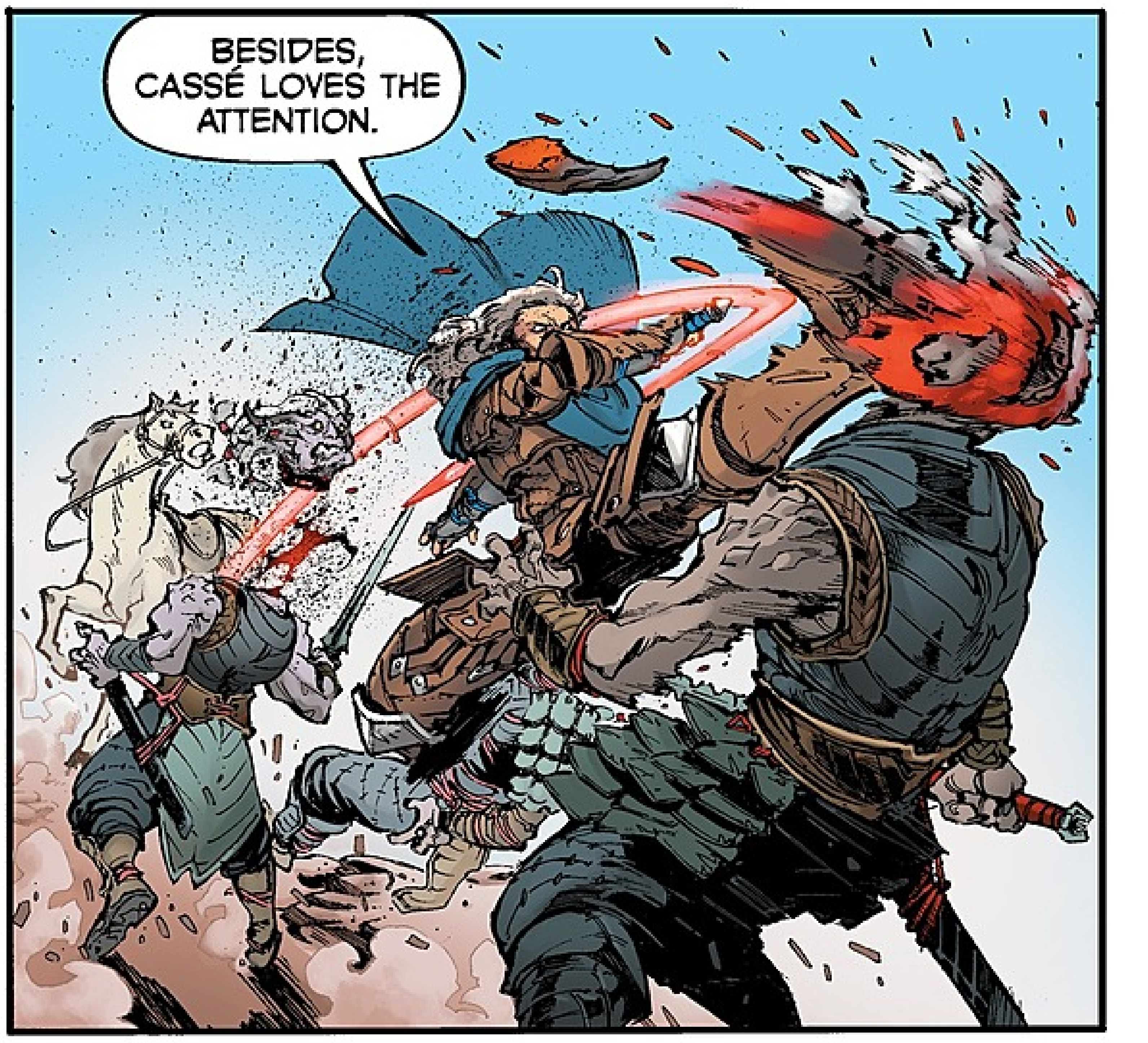

YOUR WORK IN KIRKWALL WAS FOR HOUSE QINTARA, AND IS WHAT LED TO YOUR BEING HIRED.
AS WELL IT SHOULD HAVE.
YOUR ONLY JOB FOR HOUSE DANARIUS WAS IN ***STARKHAVEN.***
AND THAT ENDED... BADLY.
THE JOB IN STARKHAVEN HAD UNFORESEEN... INTERFERENCE.
BUT IT WAS ***NOT*** THE ONLY JOB YOUR MASTER HIRED ME FOR.
BEFORE CARASTES FELL, I WAS TO DECIPHER THIS ARTIFACT. MAKE IT WORK THE WAY YOUR MASTER'S ***FATHER*** HAD IN YEARS PAST.
I HAVE DONE THIS. THOUGH WITHOUT THE JOURNAL, ANY ***NEW*** METHODS STILL NEED REFINEMENT.
WHAT EXACTLY ***IS*** IT?
IF USED PROPERLY? UNLIMITED POWER.
This is the way of Tevinter.
The way of the world, really.
WHICH IS WHY THE ***QUNARI*** HAVE TAKEN SUCH AN INTEREST...
UH... SIR?
WE LOST THEM.
IMPOSSIBLE. THERE MUST BE ANOTHER EXPLANATION.

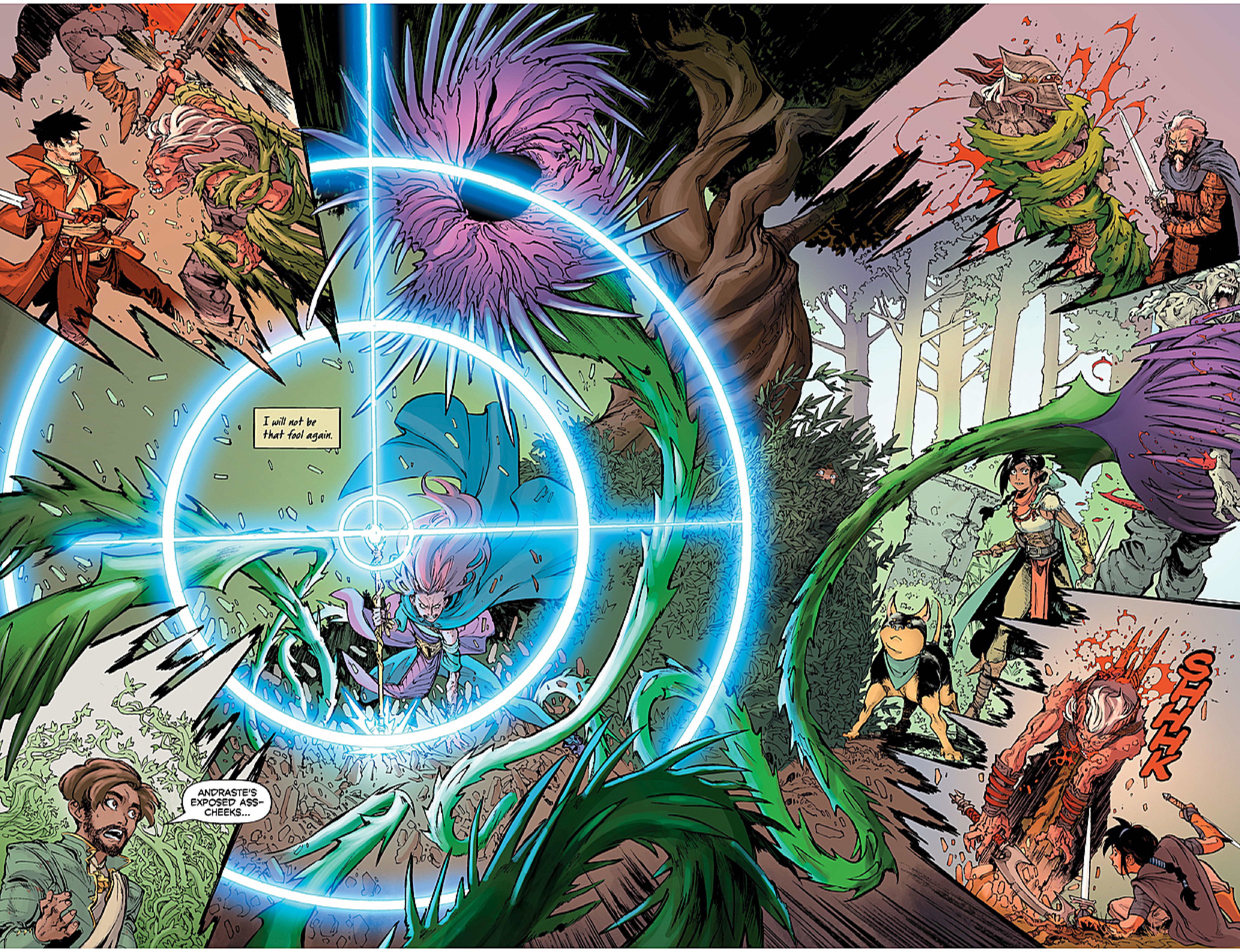

TELL ME *AGAIN* WHY WE HAVE TO FIGHT TO PROTECT THAT CARAVAN?
BECAUSE IT IS HEADED TO CASTELLUM TENEBRIS, AND WILL LEAD US RIGHT TO IT, IF WE CAN KEEP IT SAFE FROM THE QUNARI.

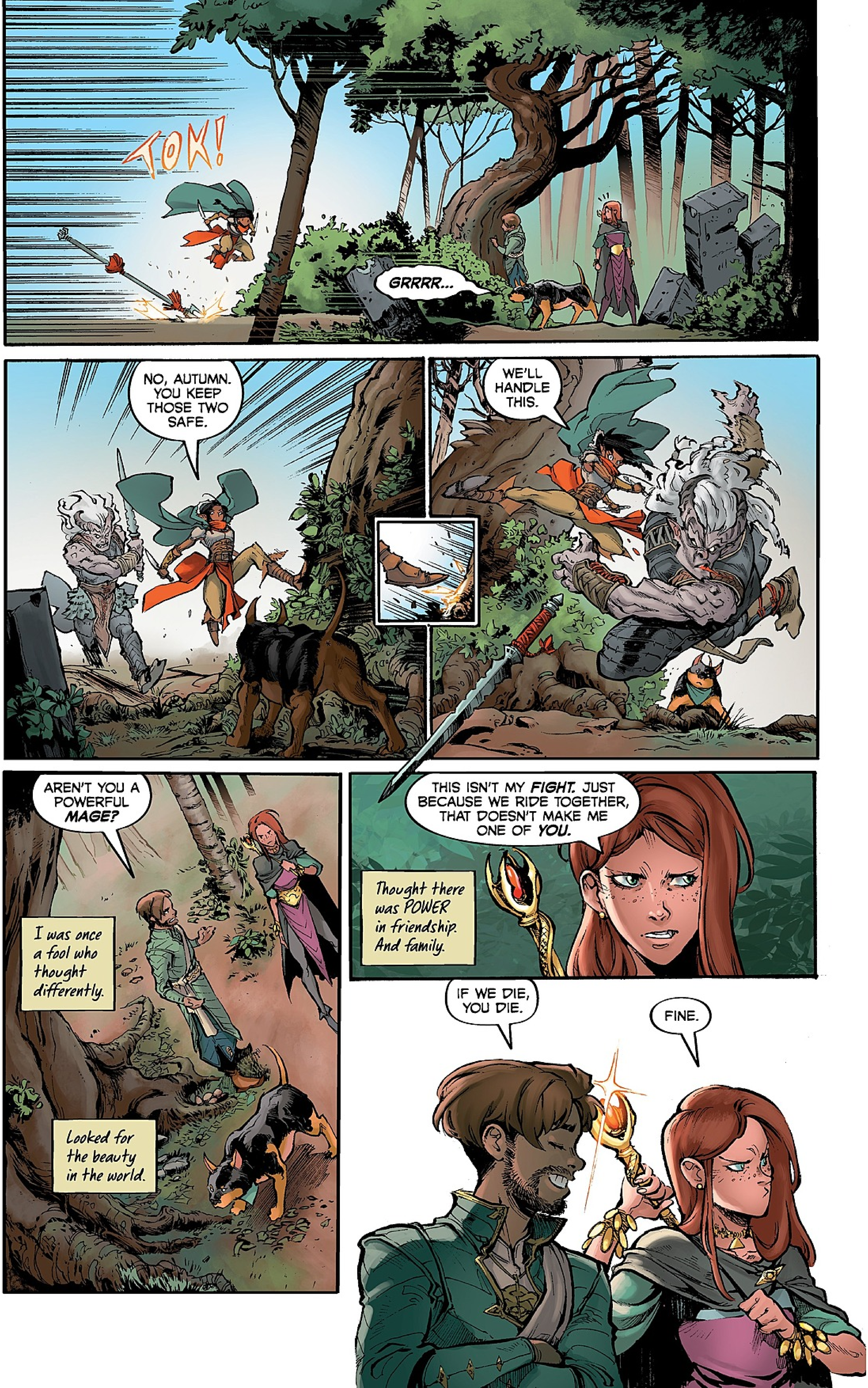

I WAS BEING SARCASTIC, MARIUS.
OH.

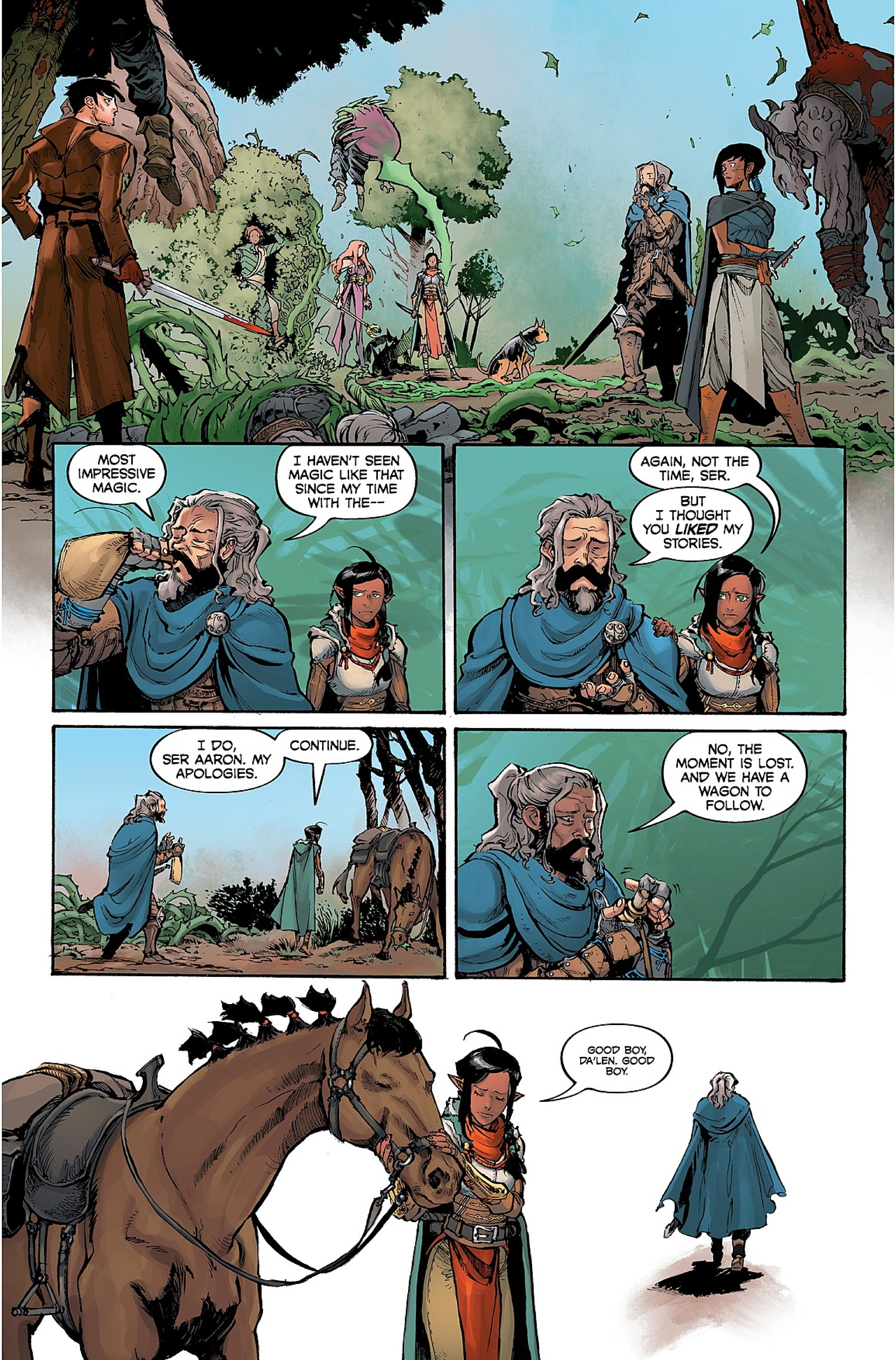

SERPENTINE, CASSÉ, SERPENTINE!
DID I EVER TELL YOU HOW I CAME TO TRAVEL WITH THIS HORSE, VAEA?
YOU HAVE, SER AARON. AND I'M GUESSING NOW ISN'T THE TIME FOR A STORY ABOUT ORLAIS.

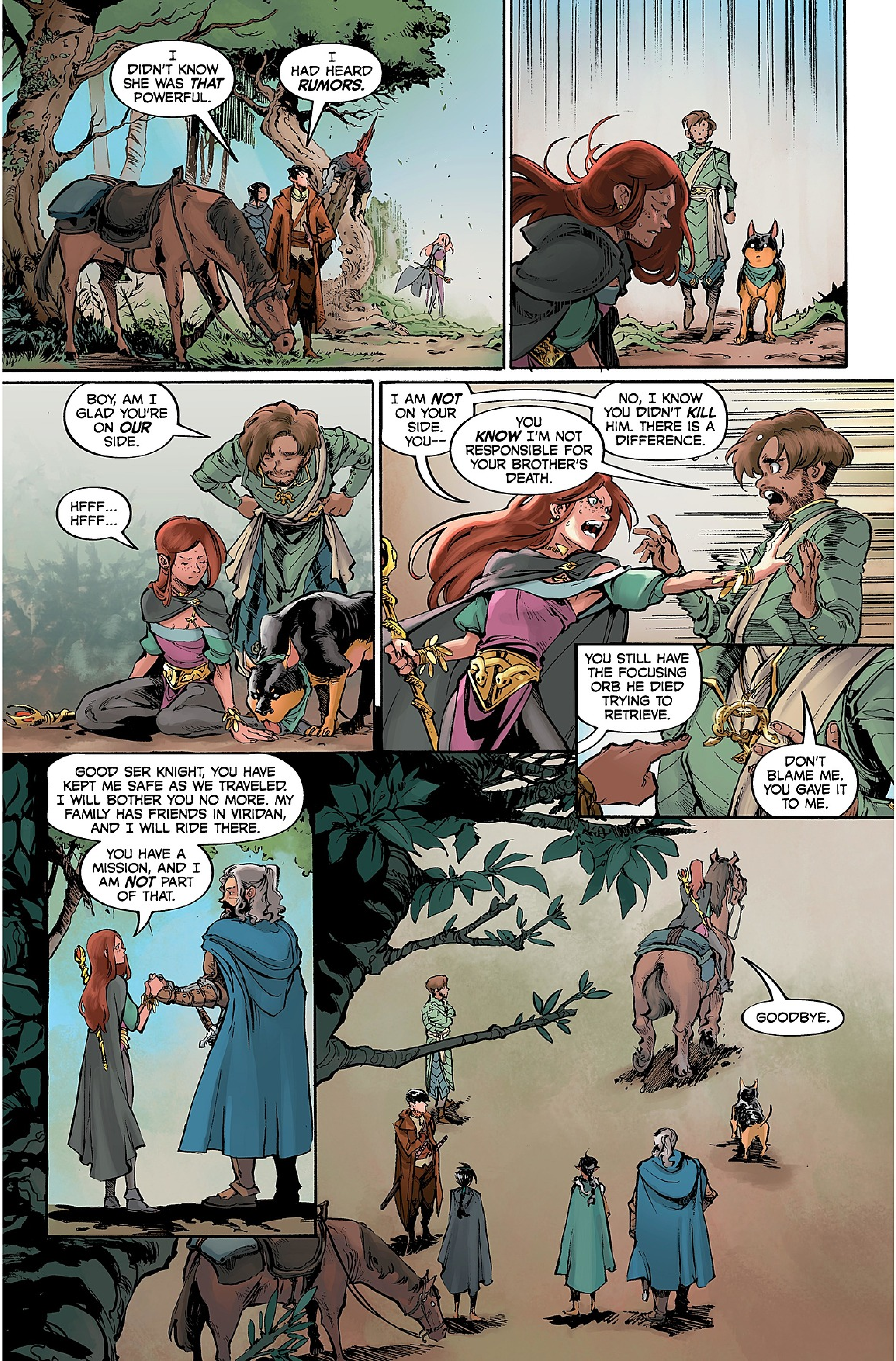

IT'S ALWAYS--
URRRRP!
--A GOOD TIME FOR A STORY.

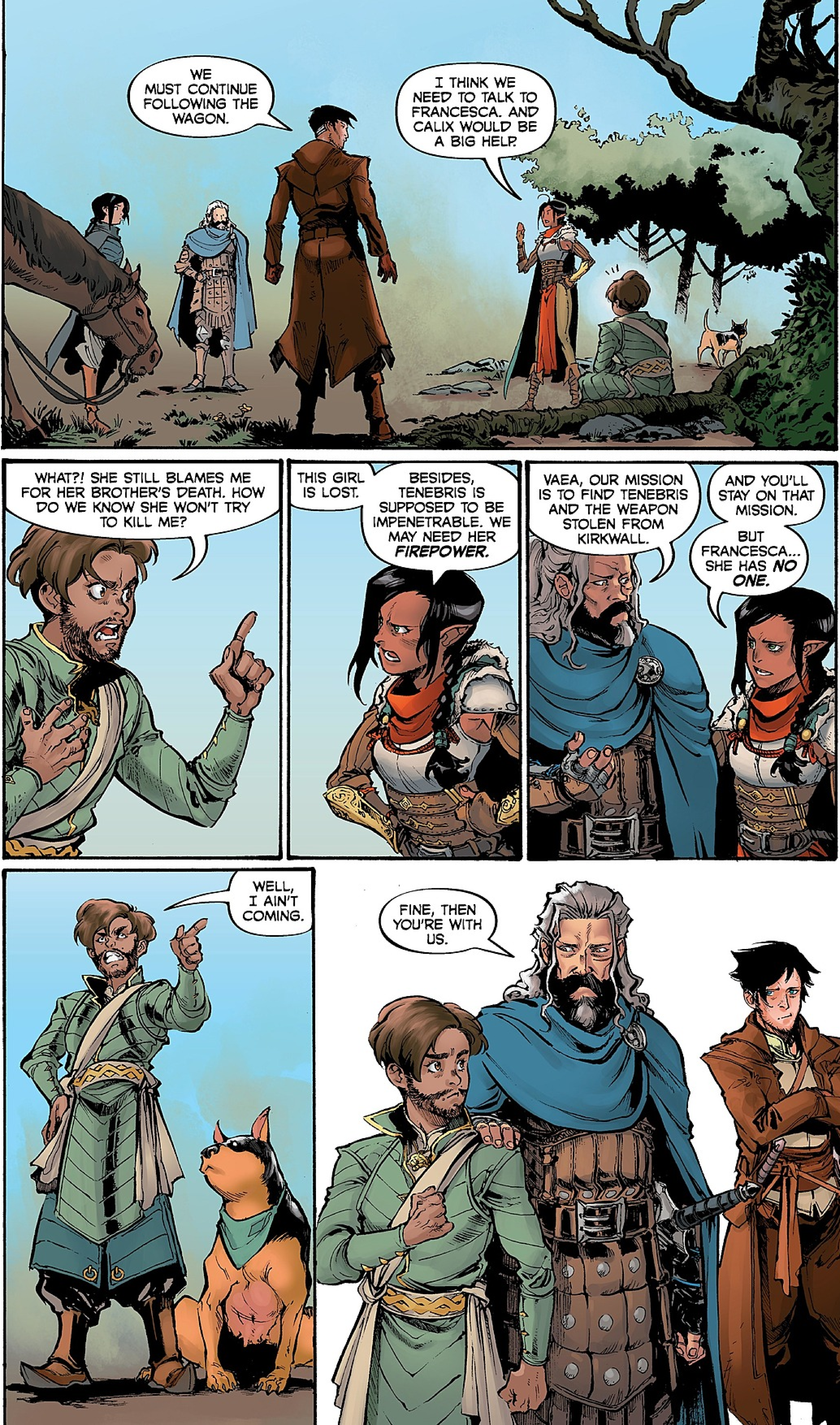

BESIDES, CASSÉ LOVES THE ATTENTION.

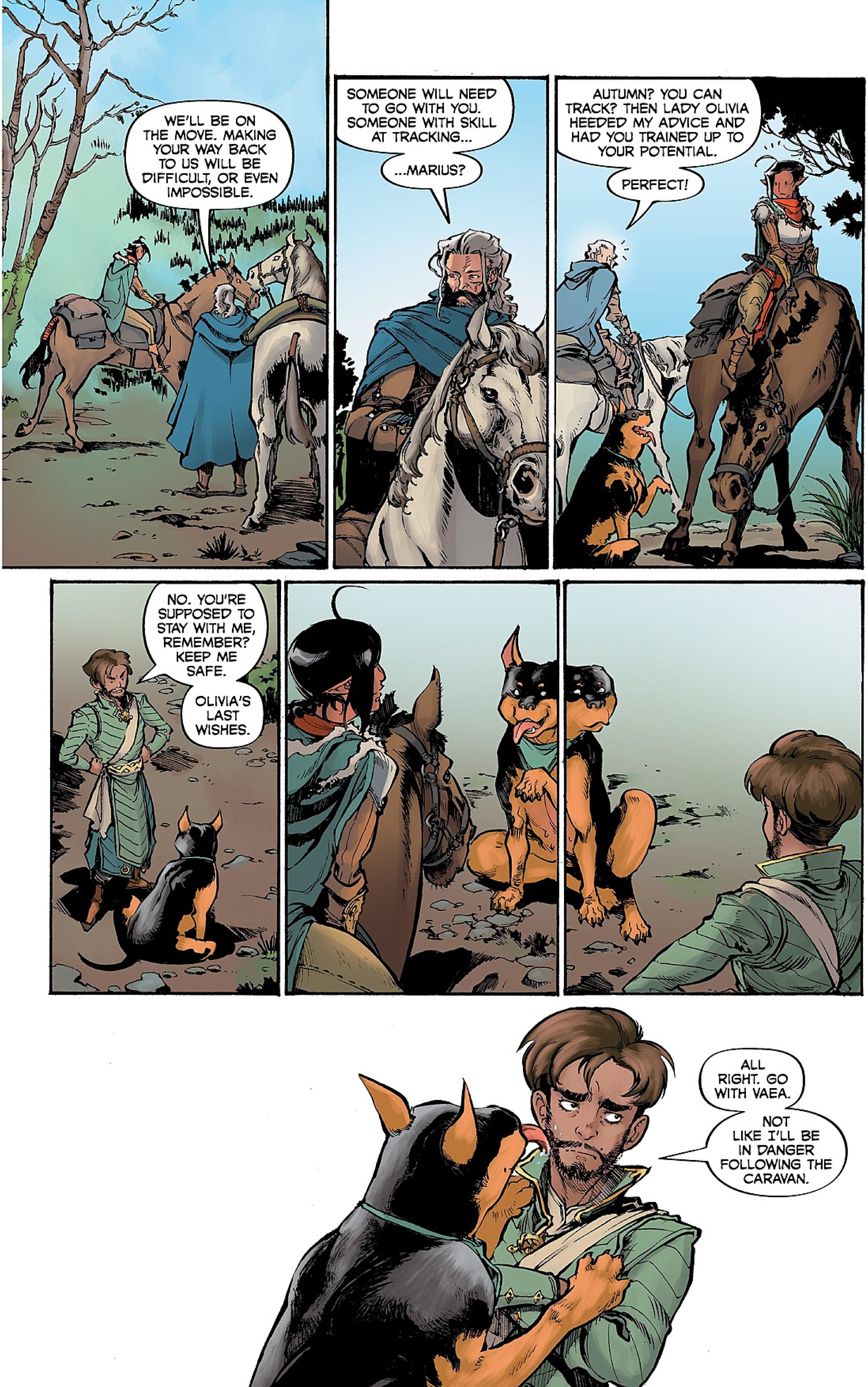

I will not be that fool again.
ANDRASTE'S EXPOSED ASS-CHEEKS...
SHHHK

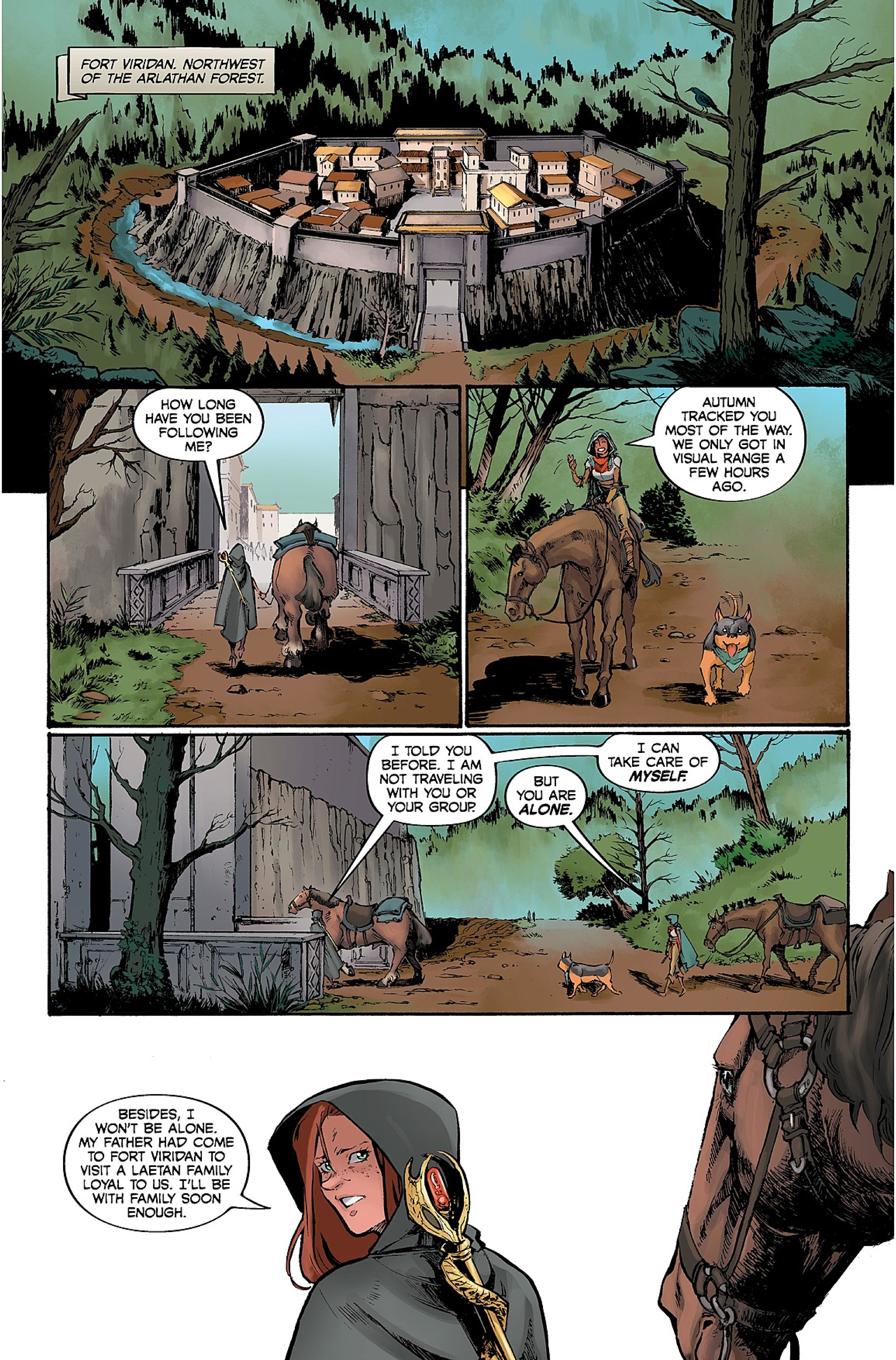

TOK!
GRRRR...
NO, AUTUMN. YOU KEEP THOSE TWO SAFE.
WE'LL HANDLE THIS.
AREN'T YOU A POWERFUL *MAGE?*
I was once a fool who thought differently.
Looked for the beauty in the world.
THIS ISN'T MY *FIGHT.* JUST BECAUSE WE RIDE TOGETHER, THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME ONE OF *YOU.*
Thought there was POWER in friendship. And family.
IF WE DIE, YOU DIE.
FINE.

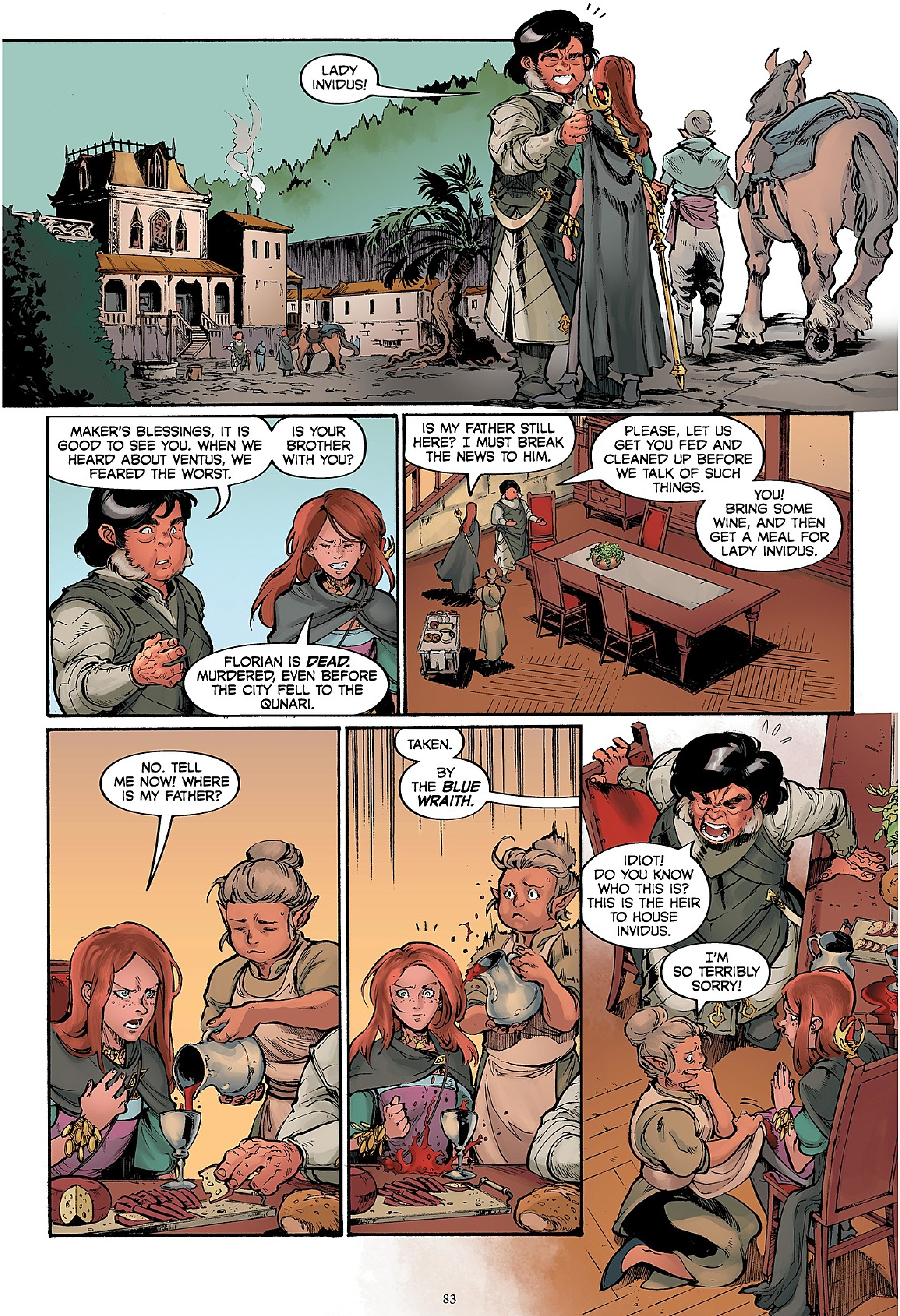

MOST IMPRESSIVE MAGIC.
I HAVEN'T SEEN MAGIC LIKE THAT SINCE MY TIME WITH THE--
AGAIN, NOT THE TIME, SER.
BUT I THOUGHT YOU *LIKED* MY STORIES.
I DO, SER AARON. MY APOLOGIES.
CONTINUE.
NO, THE MOMENT IS LOST. AND WE HAVE A WAGON TO FOLLOW.
GOOD BOY, DA'LEN. GOOD BOY.

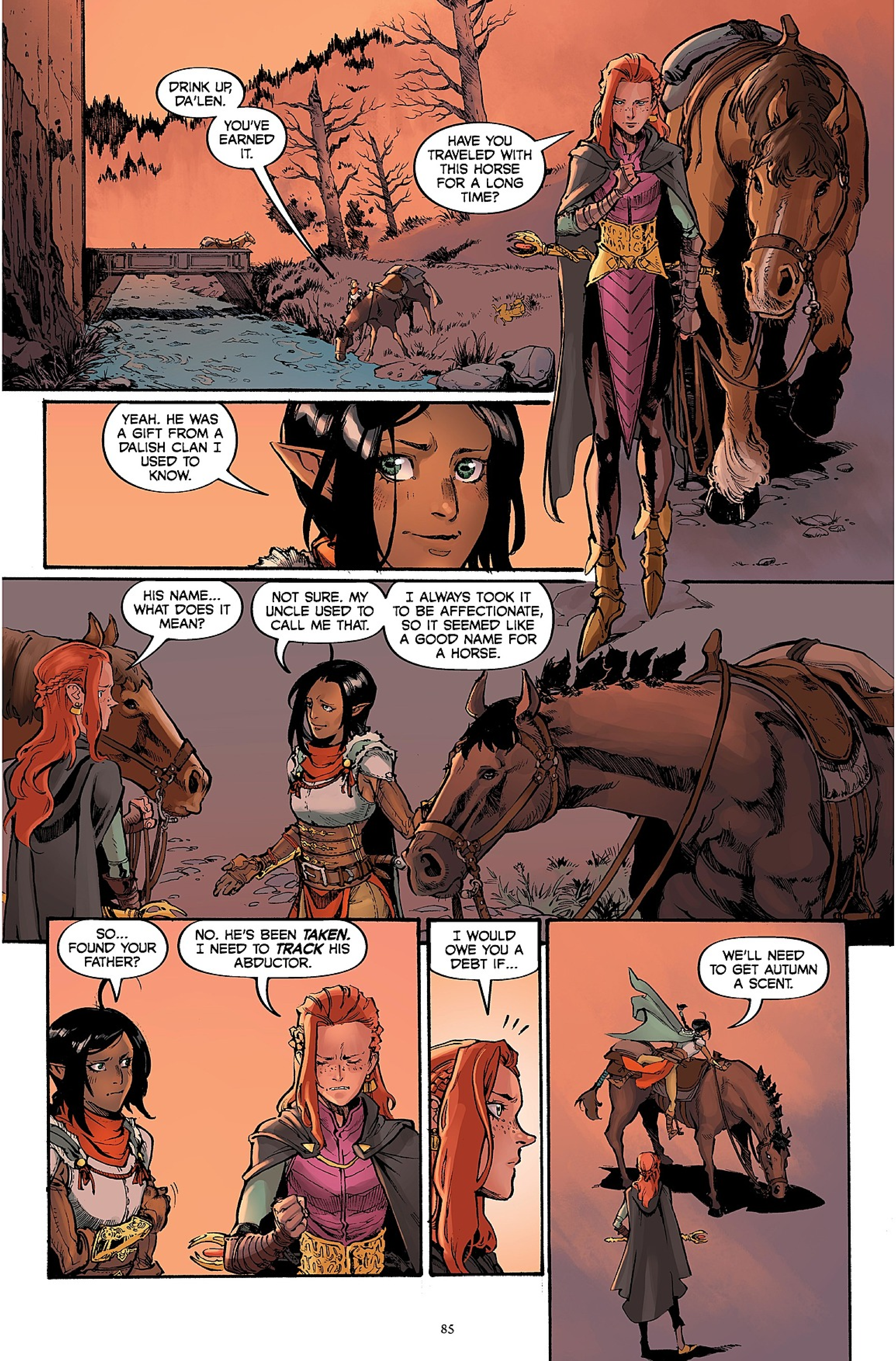

I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS *THAT* POWERFUL.
I HAD HEARD *RUMORS.*
BOY, AM I GLAD YOU'RE ON *OUR* SIDE.
HFFF... HFFF...
I AM *NOT* ON YOUR SIDE. YOU--
YOU *KNOW* I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH.
NO, I KNOW YOU DIDN'T *KILL* HIM. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE.
YOU STILL HAVE THE FOCUSING ORB HE DIED TRYING TO RETRIEVE.
DON'T BLAME ME. YOU GAVE IT TO ME.
GOOD SER KNIGHT, YOU HAVE KEPT ME SAFE AS WE TRAVELED. I WILL BOTHER YOU NO MORE. MY FAMILY HAS FRIENDS IN VIRIDAN, AND I WILL RIDE THERE.
YOU HAVE A MISSION, AND I AM *NOT* PART OF THAT.
GOODBYE.

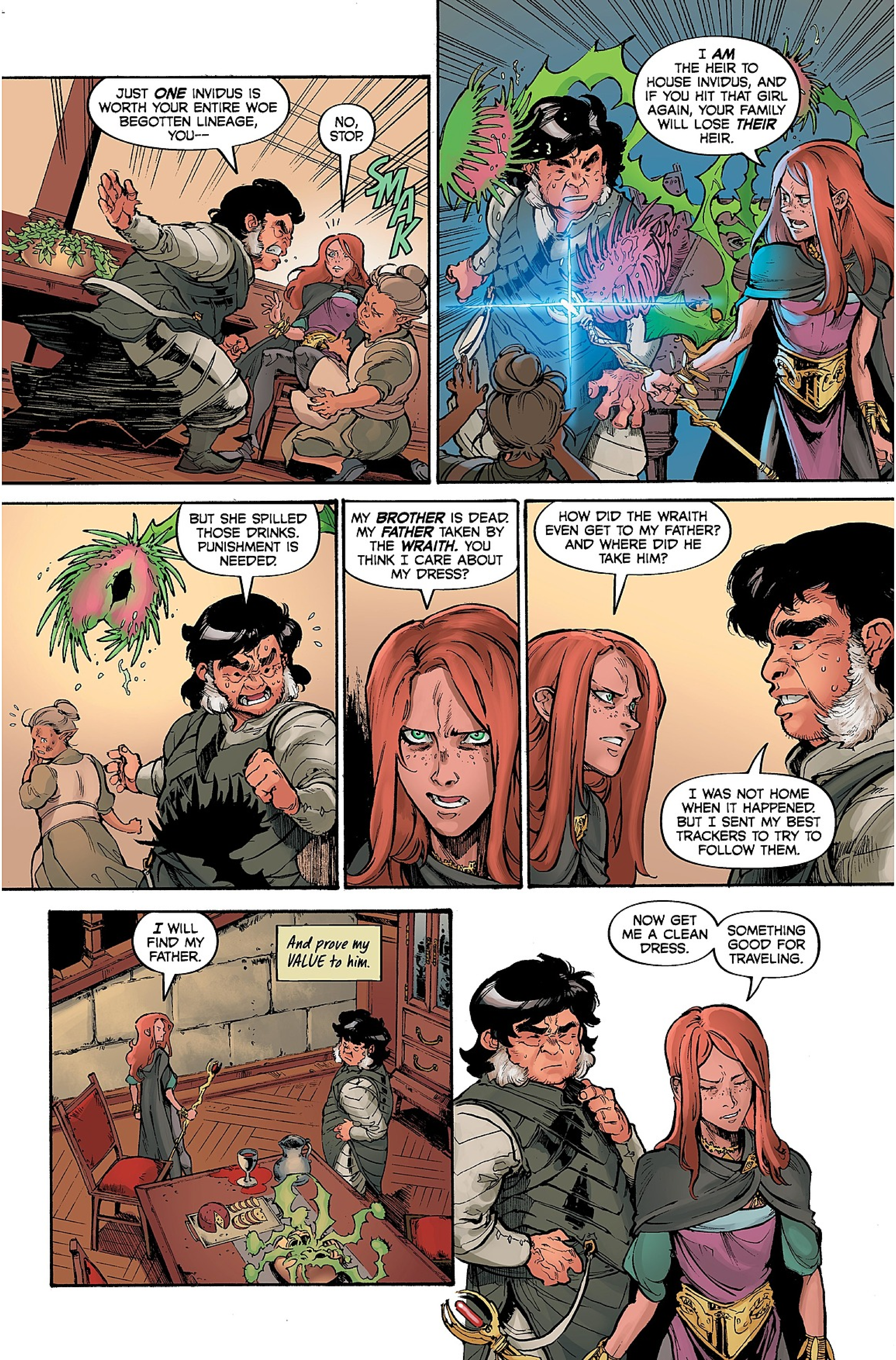

WE MUST CONTINUE FOLLOWING THE WAGON.
I THINK WE NEED TO TALK TO FRANCESCA. AND CALIX WOULD BE A BIG HELP.
WHAT?! SHE STILL BLAMES ME FOR HER BROTHER'S DEATH. HOW DO WE KNOW SHE WON'T TRY TO KILL ME?
THIS GIRL IS LOST.
BESIDES, TENEBRIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE IMPENETRABLE. WE MAY NEED HER *FIREPOWER.*
VAEA, OUR MISSION IS TO FIND TENEBRIS AND THE WEAPON STOLEN FROM KIRKWALL.
AND YOU'LL STAY ON THAT MISSION.
BUT FRANCESCA... SHE HAS *NO ONE.*
WELL, I AIN'T COMING.
FINE, THEN YOU'RE WITH US.

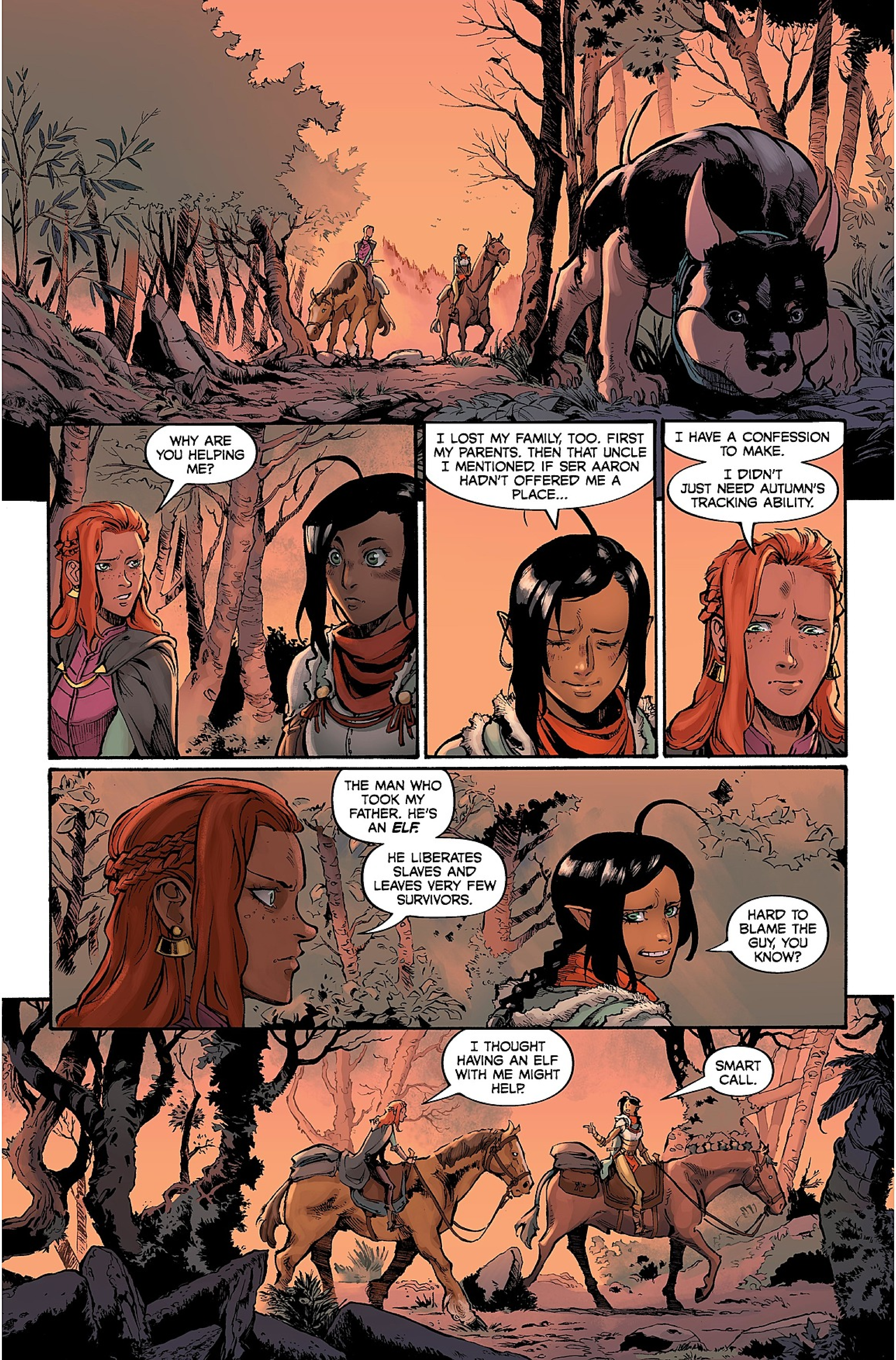

WE'LL BE ON THE MOVE. MAKING YOUR WAY BACK TO US WILL BE DIFFICULT, OR EVEN IMPOSSIBLE.
SOMEONE WILL NEED TO GO WITH YOU. SOMEONE WITH SKILL AT TRACKING...
...MARIUS?
AUTUMN? YOU CAN TRACK? THEN LADY OLIVIA HEEDED MY ADVICE AND HAD YOU TRAINED UP TO YOUR POTENTIAL.
PERFECT!
NO. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO STAY WITH ME, REMEMBER? KEEP ME SAFE.
OLIVIA'S LAST WISHES.
ALL RIGHT. GO WITH VAEA.
NOT LIKE I'LL BE IN DANGER FOLLOWING THE CARAVAN.

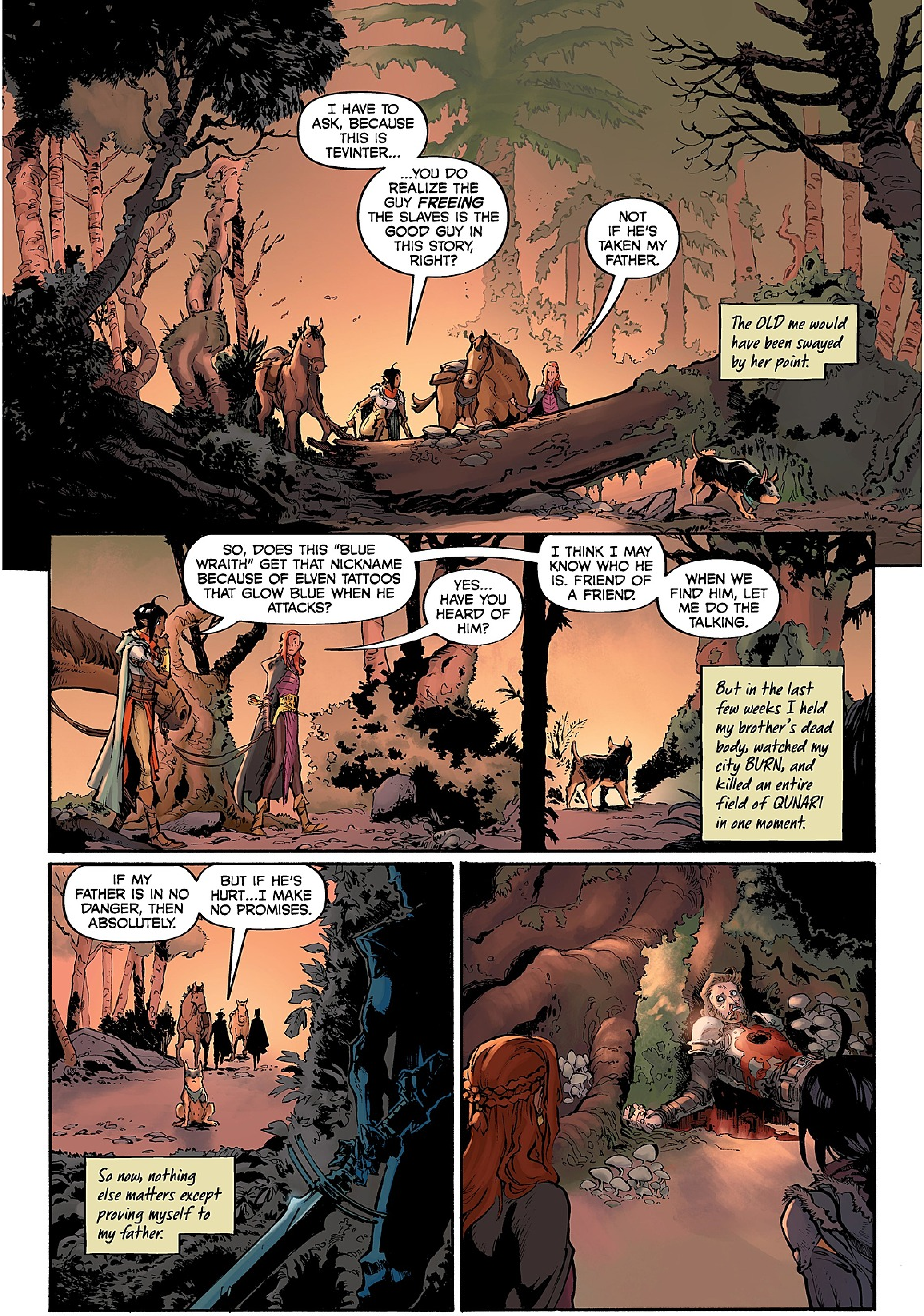

FORT VIRIDAN. NORTHWEST OF THE ARLATHAN FOREST.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING ME?
AUTUMN TRACKED YOU MOST OF THE WAY. WE ONLY GOT IN VISUAL RANGE A FEW HOURS AGO.
I TOLD YOU BEFORE. I AM NOT TRAVELING WITH YOU OR YOUR GROUP.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
BUT YOU ARE ALONE.
BESIDES, I WON'T BE ALONE. MY FATHER HAD COME TO FORT VIRIDAN TO VISIT A LAETAN FAMILY LOYAL TO US. I'LL BE WITH FAMILY SOON ENOUGH.

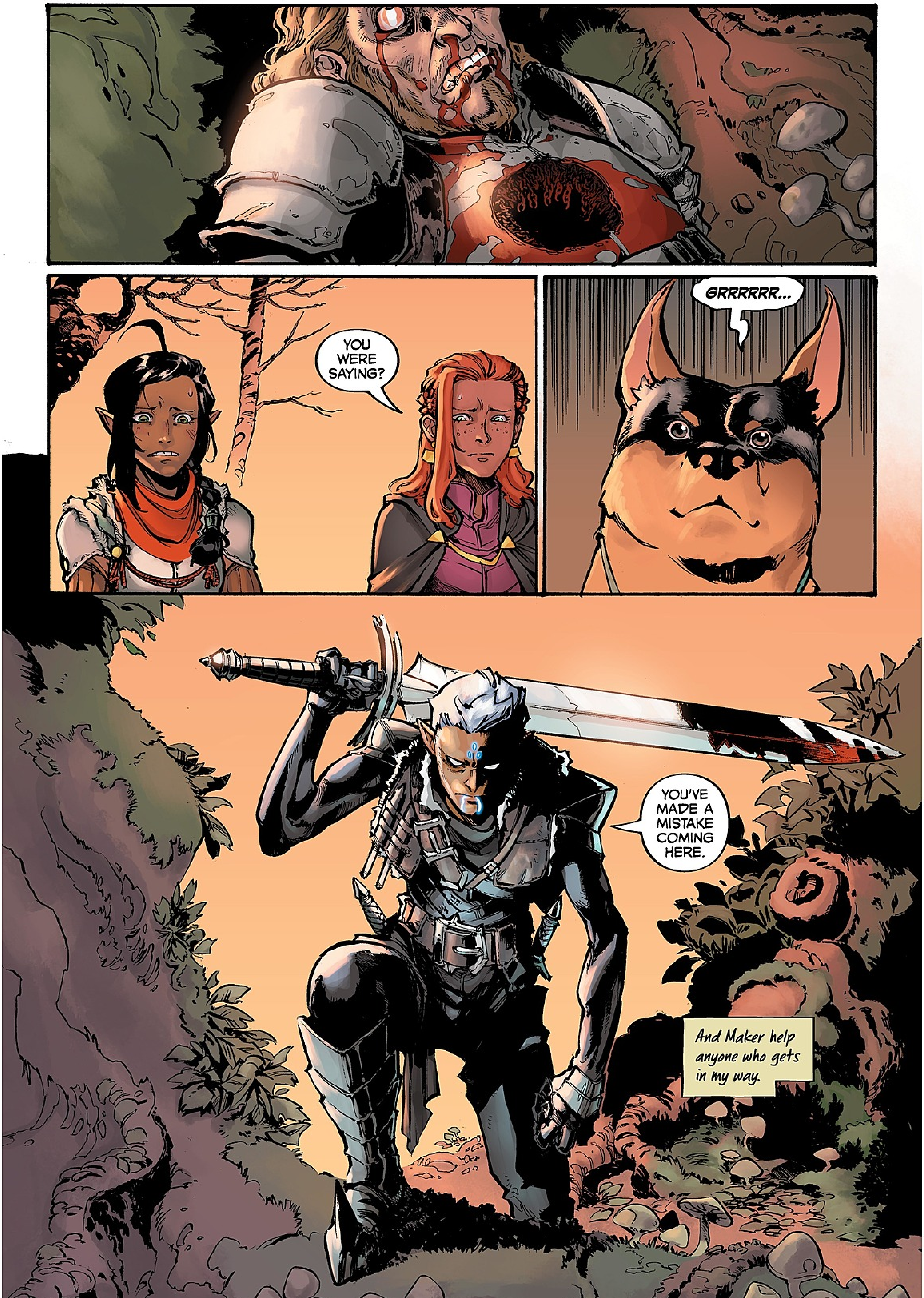

LADY INVIDUS!
MAKER'S BLESSINGS, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU. WHEN WE HEARD ABOUT VENTUS, WE FEARED THE WORST.
IS YOUR BROTHER WITH YOU?
FLORIAN IS *DEAD.* MURDERED, EVEN BEFORE THE CITY FELL TO THE QUNARI.
IS MY FATHER STILL HERE? I MUST BREAK THE NEWS TO HIM.
PLEASE, LET US GET YOU FED AND CLEANED UP BEFORE WE TALK OF SUCH THINGS.
YOU! BRING SOME WINE, AND THEN GET A MEAL FOR LADY INVIDUS.
NO. TELL ME NOW! WHERE IS MY FATHER?
TAKEN.
BY THE ***BLUE WRAITH.***
IDIOT! DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS? THIS IS THE HEIR TO HOUSE INVIDUS.
I'M SO TERRIBLY SORRY!

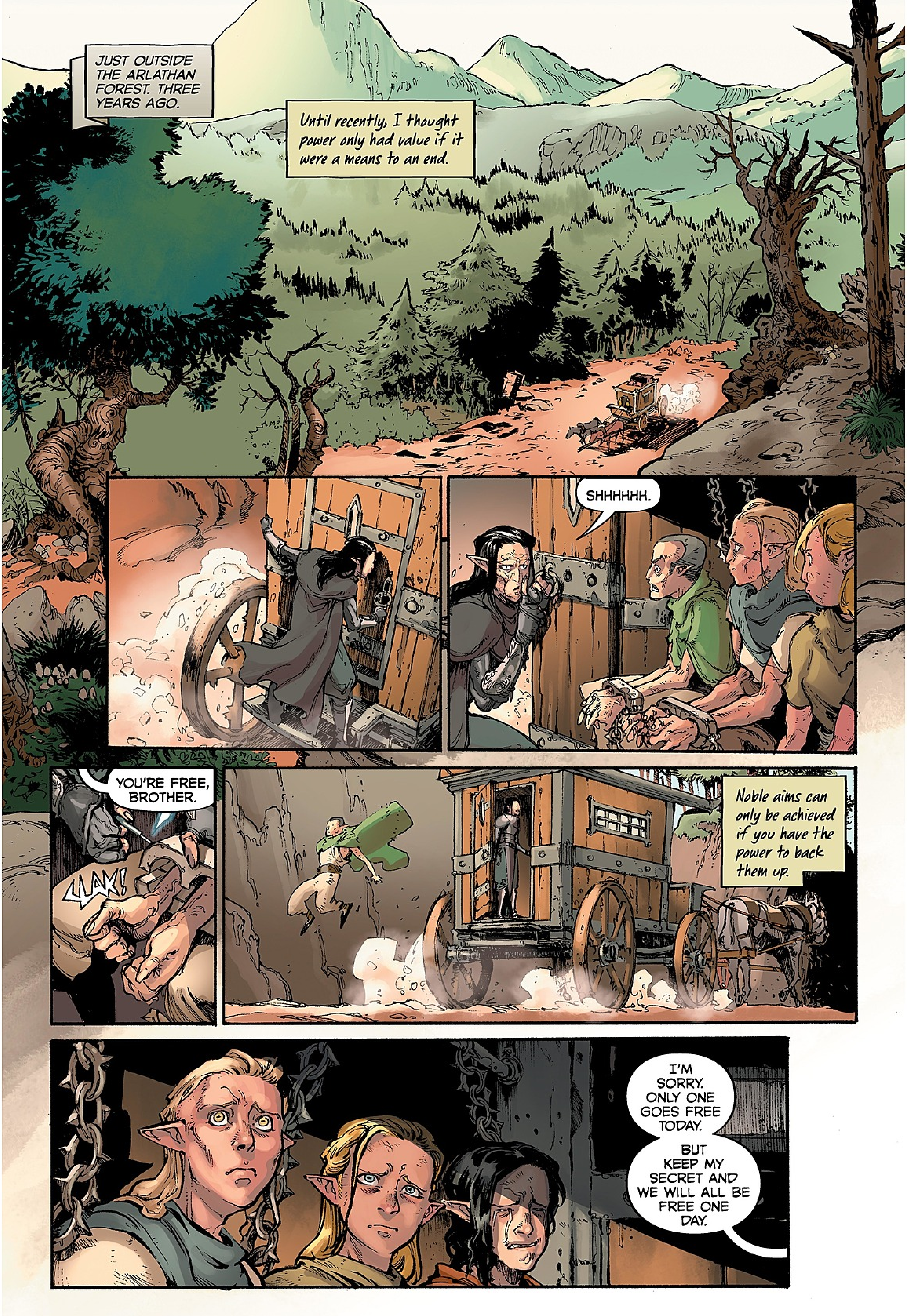

DRINK UP, DA'LEN.
YOU'VE EARNED IT.
HAVE YOU TRAVELED WITH THIS HORSE FOR A LONG TIME?
YEAH. HE WAS A GIFT FROM A DALISH CLAN I USED TO KNOW.
HIS NAME... WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
NOT SURE. MY UNCLE USED TO CALL ME THAT.
I ALWAYS TOOK IT TO BE AFFECTIONATE, SO IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD NAME FOR A HORSE.
SO... FOUND YOUR FATHER?
NO. HE'S BEEN *TAKEN*. I NEED TO *TRACK* HIS ABDUCTOR.
I WOULD OWE YOU A DEBT IF...
WE'LL NEED TO GET AUTUMN A SCENT.

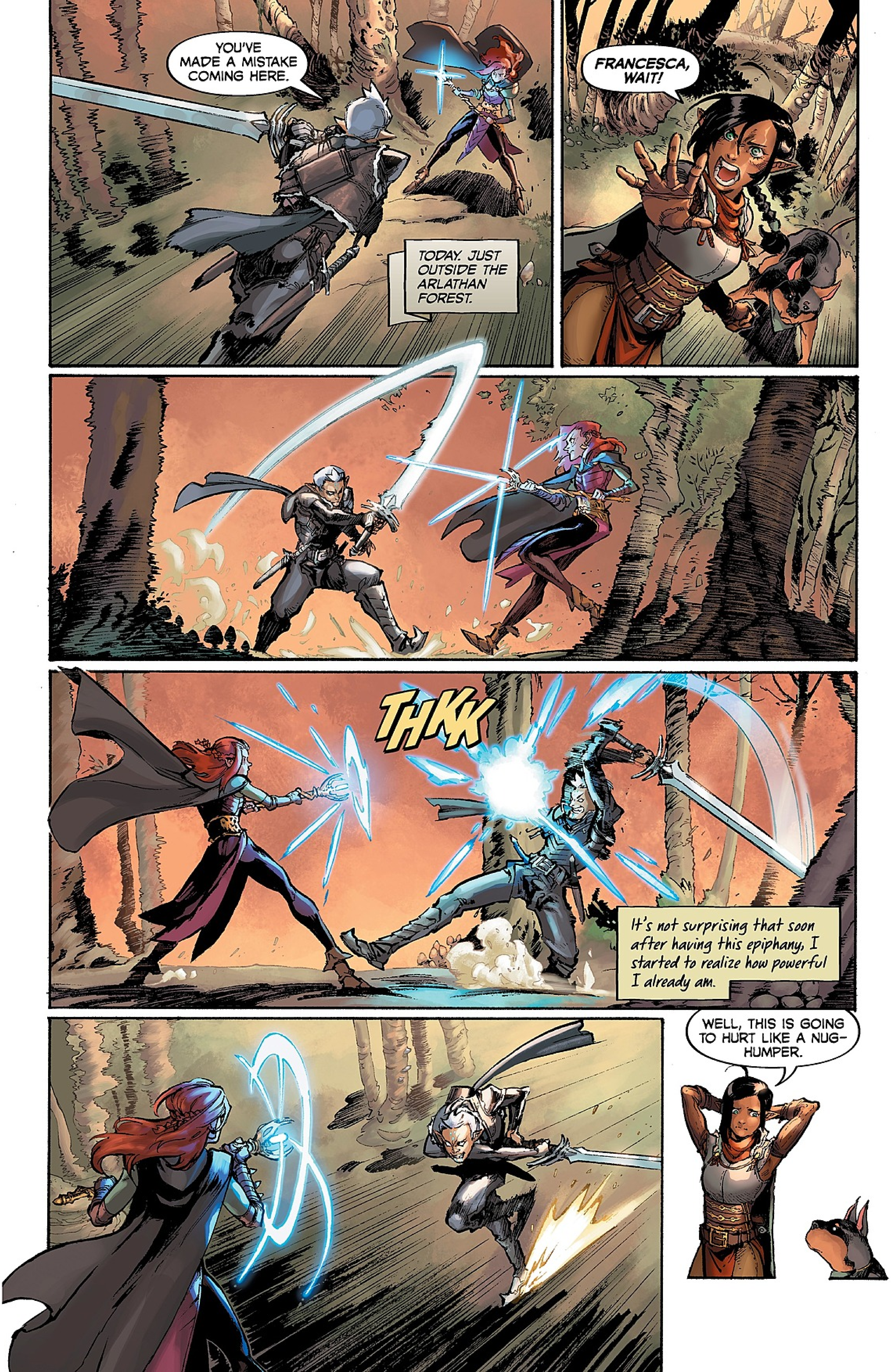

JUST *ONE* INVIDUS IS WORTH YOUR ENTIRE WOE BEGOTTEN LINEAGE, YOU--
NO, STOP.
SMAK
I *AM* THE HEIR TO HOUSE INVIDUS, AND IF YOU HIT THAT GIRL AGAIN, YOUR FAMILY WILL LOSE *THEIR* HEIR.
BUT SHE SPILLED THOSE DRINKS. PUNISHMENT IS NEEDED.
MY *BROTHER* IS DEAD. MY *FATHER* TAKEN BY THE *WRAITH*. YOU THINK I CARE ABOUT MY DRESS?
HOW DID THE WRAITH EVEN GET TO MY FATHER? AND WHERE DID HE TAKE HIM?
I WAS NOT HOME WHEN IT HAPPENED. BUT I SENT MY BEST TRACKERS TO TRY TO FOLLOW THEM.
I WILL FIND MY FATHER.
And prove my VALUE to him.
NOW GET ME A CLEAN DRESS.
SOMETHING GOOD FOR TRAVELING.

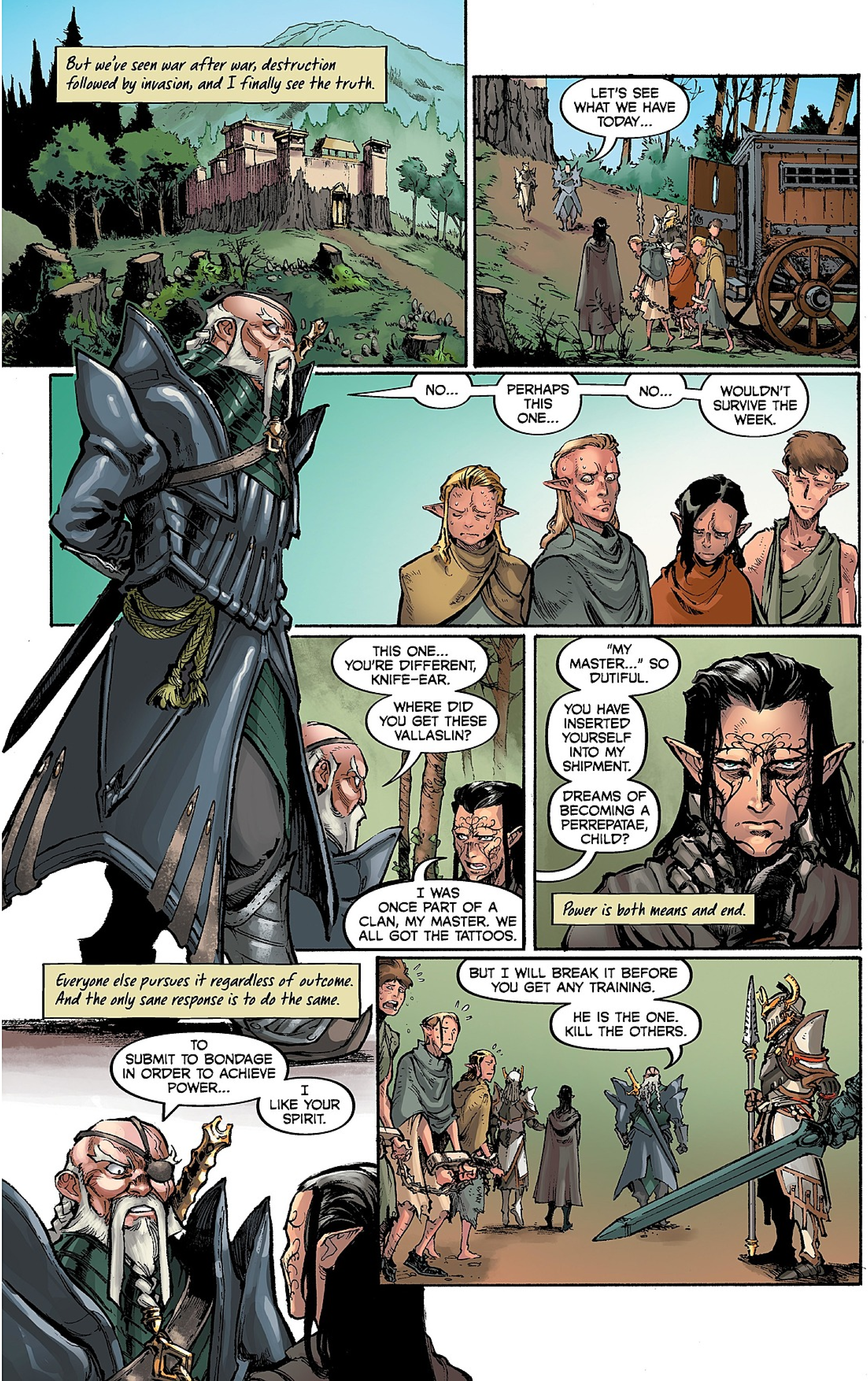

WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
I LOST MY FAMILY, TOO. FIRST MY PARENTS. THEN THAT UNCLE I MENTIONED. IF SER AARON HADN'T OFFERED ME A PLACE...
I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE.
I DIDN'T JUST NEED AUTUMN'S TRACKING ABILITY.
THE MAN WHO TOOK MY FATHER. HE'S AN *ELF*.
HE LIBERATES SLAVES AND LEAVES VERY FEW SURVIVORS.
HARD TO BLAME THE GUY, YOU KNOW?
I THOUGHT HAVING AN ELF WITH ME MIGHT HELP.
SMART CALL.

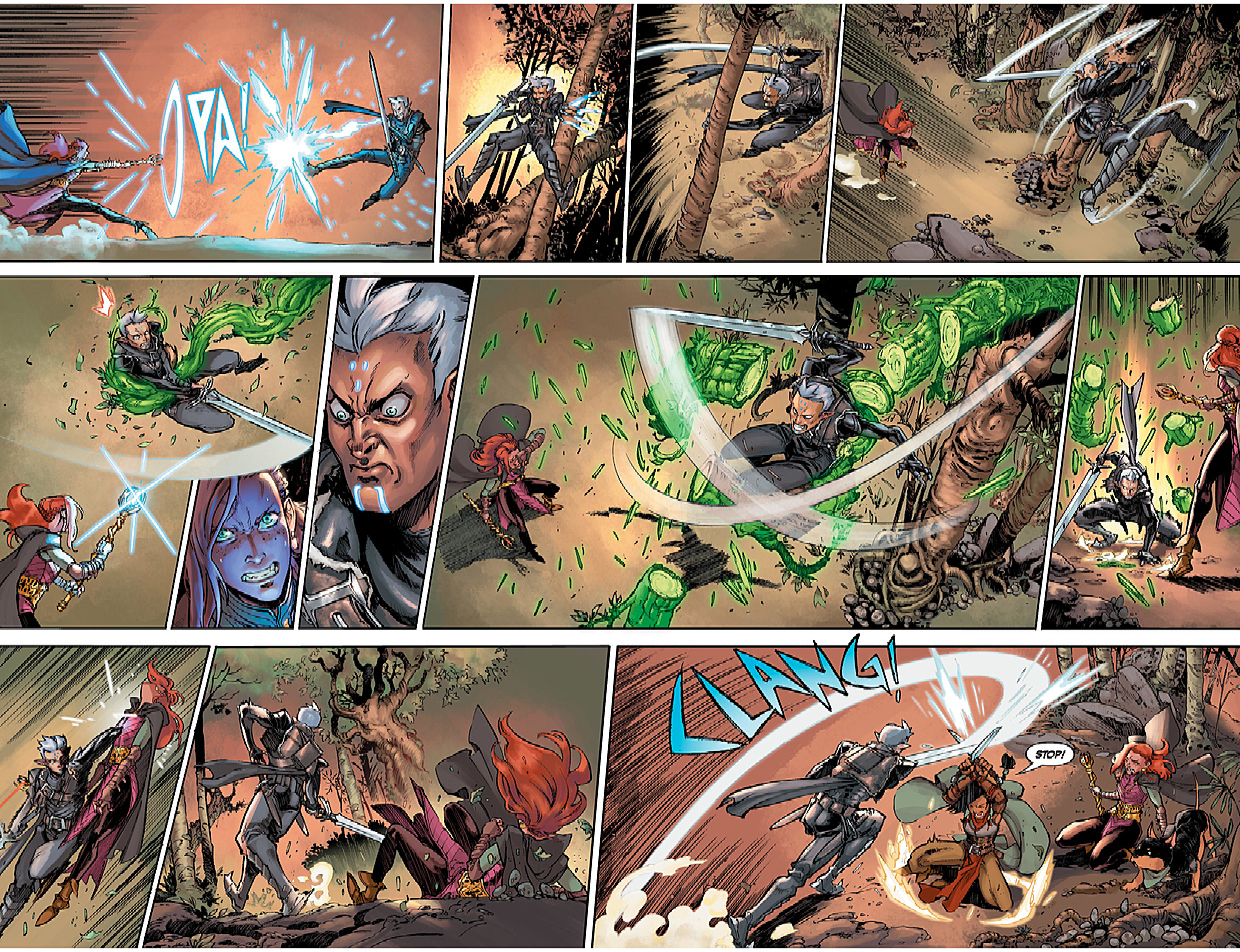

I HAVE TO ASK, BECAUSE THIS IS TEVINTER...
...YOU DO REALIZE THE GUY *FREEING* THE SLAVES IS THE GOOD GUY IN THIS STORY, RIGHT?
NOT IF HE'S TAKEN MY FATHER.
The OLD me would have been swayed by her point.
SO, DOES THIS "BLUE WRAITH" GET THAT NICKNAME BECAUSE OF ELVEN TATTOOS THAT GLOW BLUE WHEN HE ATTACKS?
YES... HAVE YOU HEARD OF HIM?
I THINK I MAY KNOW WHO HE IS. FRIEND OF A FRIEND.
WHEN WE FIND HIM, LET ME DO THE TALKING.
But in the last few weeks I held my brother's dead body, watched my city BURN, and killed an entire field of QUNARI in one moment.
IF MY FATHER IS IN NO DANGER, THEN ABSOLUTELY.
BUT IF HE'S HURT...I MAKE NO PROMISES.
So now, nothing else matters except proving myself to my father.

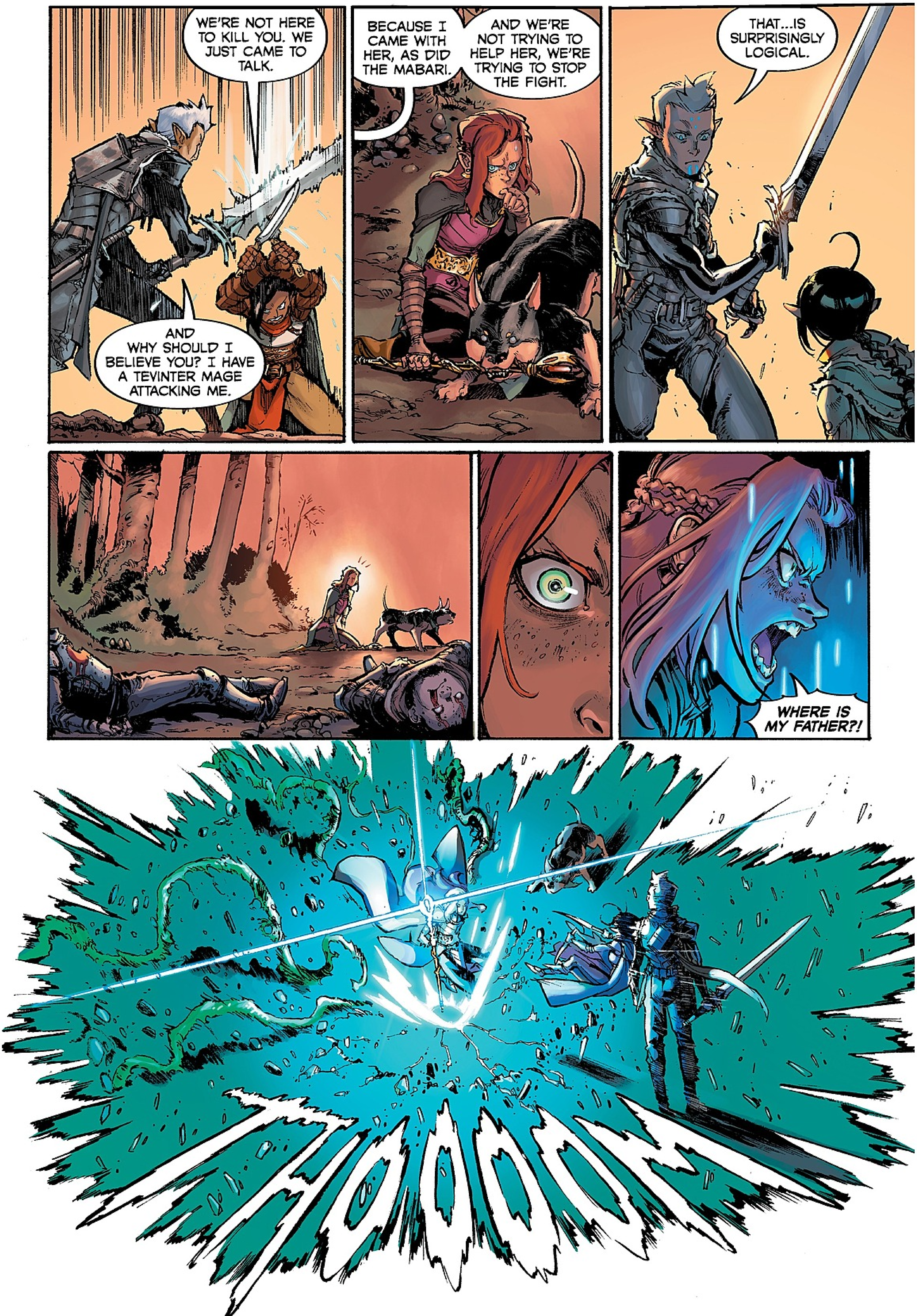

YOU WERE SAYING?
GRRRRRR...
YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE COMING HERE.
And Maker help anyone who gets in my way.

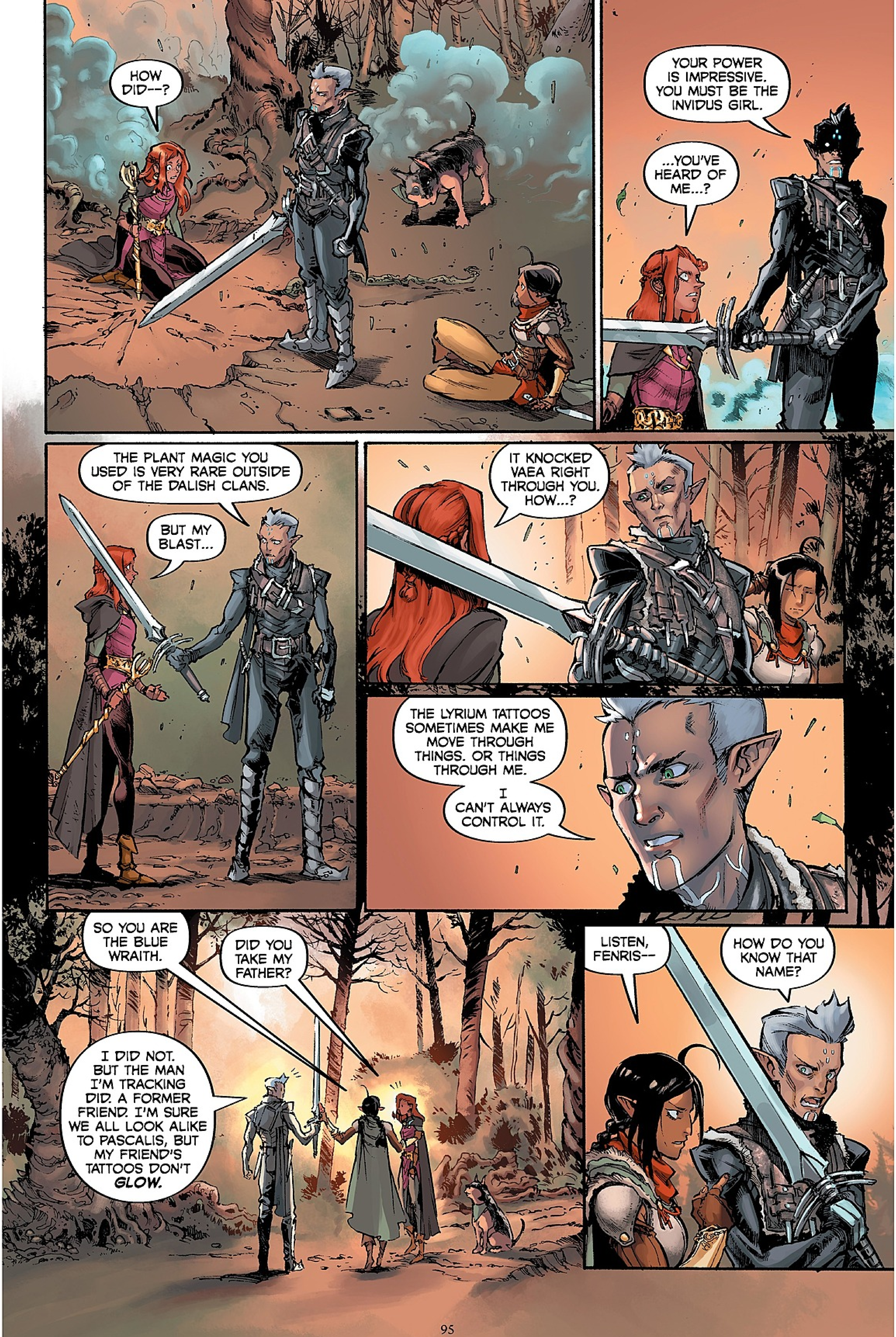

JUST OUTSIDE THE ARLATHAN FOREST. THREE YEARS AGO.
Until recently, I thought power only had value if it were a means to an end.
SHHHHHH.
YOU'RE FREE, BROTHER.
CLAK!
Noble aims can only be achieved if you have the power to back them up.
I'M SORRY. ONLY ONE GOES FREE TODAY.
BUT KEEP MY SECRET AND WE WILL ALL BE FREE ONE DAY.

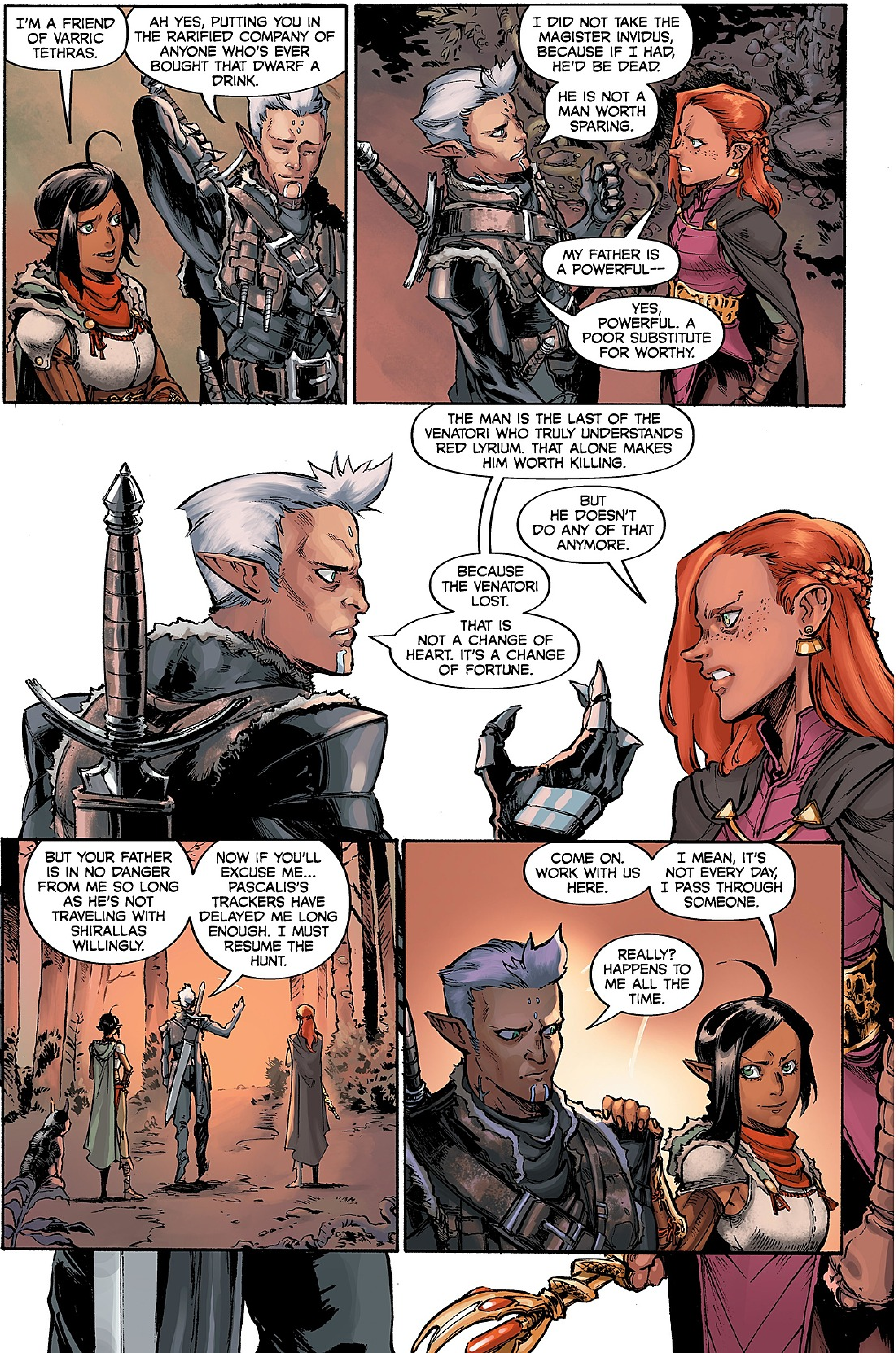

YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE COMING HERE.
TODAY. JUST OUTSIDE THE ARLATHAN FOREST.
FRANCESCA, WAIT!
THKK
It's not surprising that soon after having this epiphany, I started to realize how powerful I already am.
WELL, THIS IS GOING TO HURT LIKE A NUG-HUMPER.

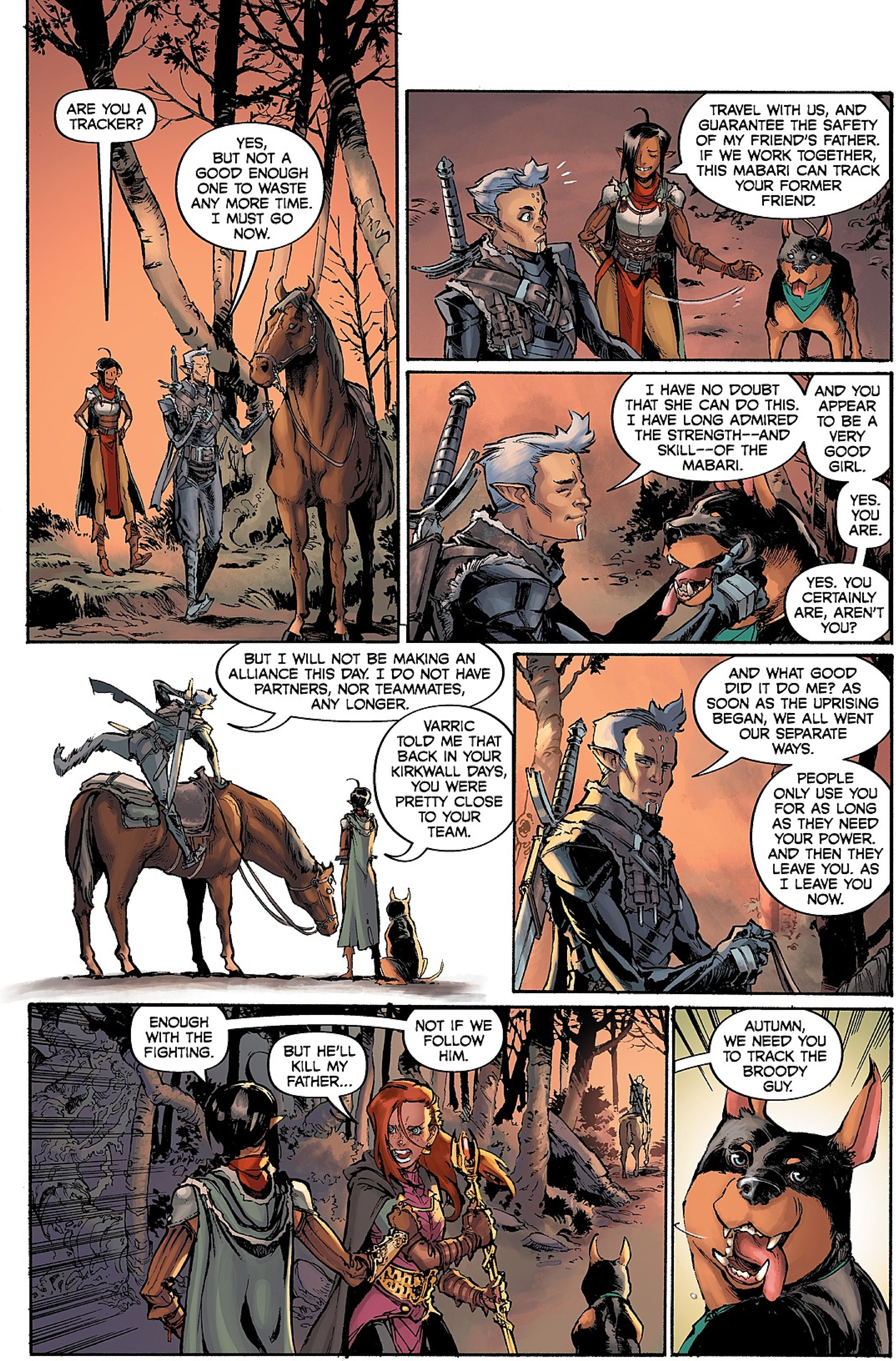

But we've seen war after war, destruction followed by invasion, and I finally see the truth.
LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE TODAY...
NO...
PERHAPS THIS ONE...
NO...
WOULDN'T SURVIVE THE WEEK.
THIS ONE... YOU'RE DIFFERENT, KNIFE-EAR.
WHERE DID YOU GET THESE VALLASLIN?
I WAS ONCE PART OF A CLAN, MY MASTER. WE ALL GOT THE TATTOOS.
"MY MASTER..." SO DUTIFUL.
YOU HAVE INSERTED YOURSELF INTO MY SHIPMENT.
DREAMS OF BECOMING A PERREPATAE, CHILD?
Power is both means and end.
Everyone else pursues it regardless of outcome. And the only sane response is to do the same.
TO SUBMIT TO BONDAGE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE POWER...
I LIKE YOUR SPIRIT.
BUT I WILL BREAK IT BEFORE YOU GET ANY TRAINING.
HE IS THE ONE. KILL THE OTHERS.

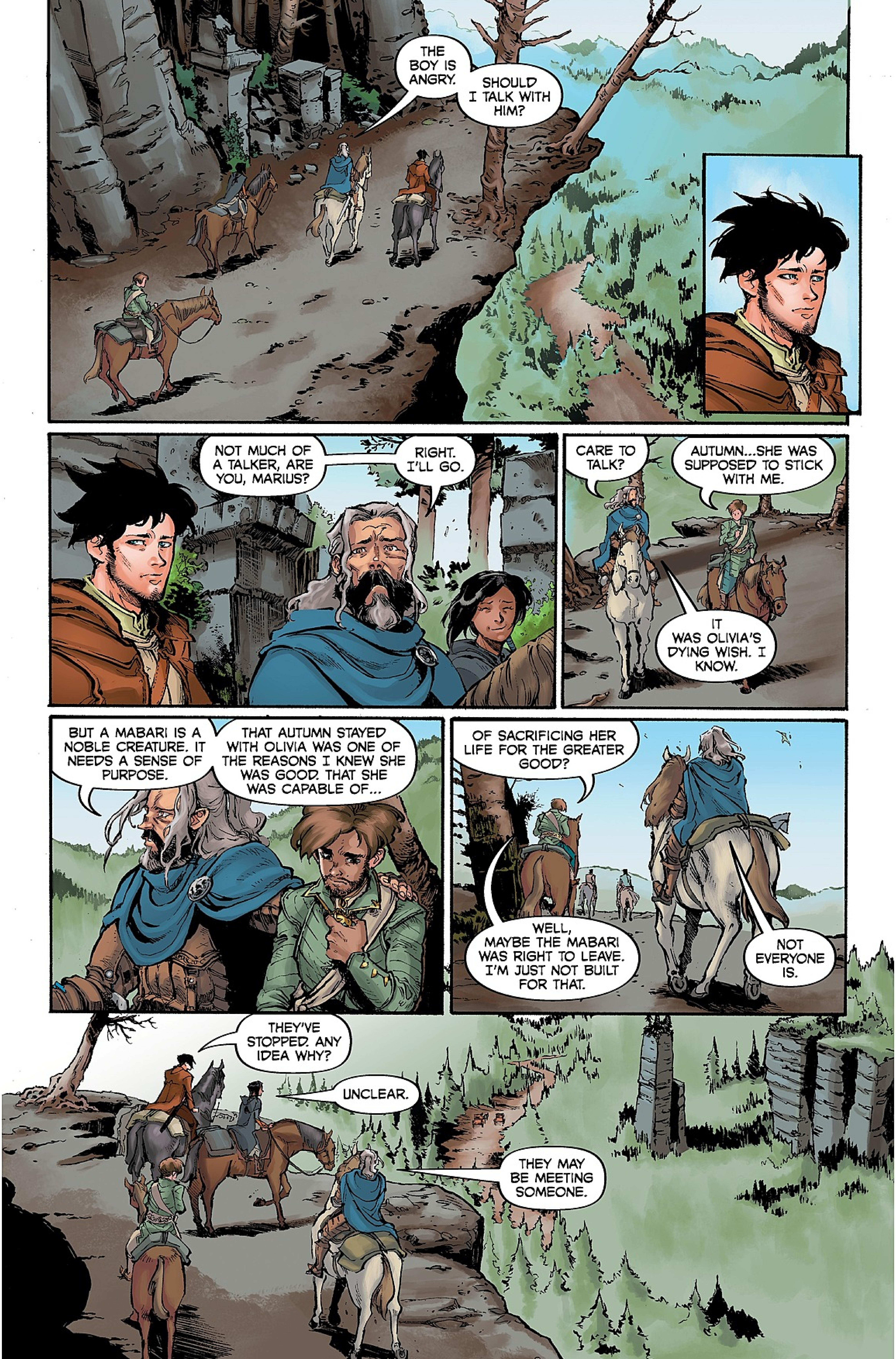

OPA!
CLLANG!
STOP!

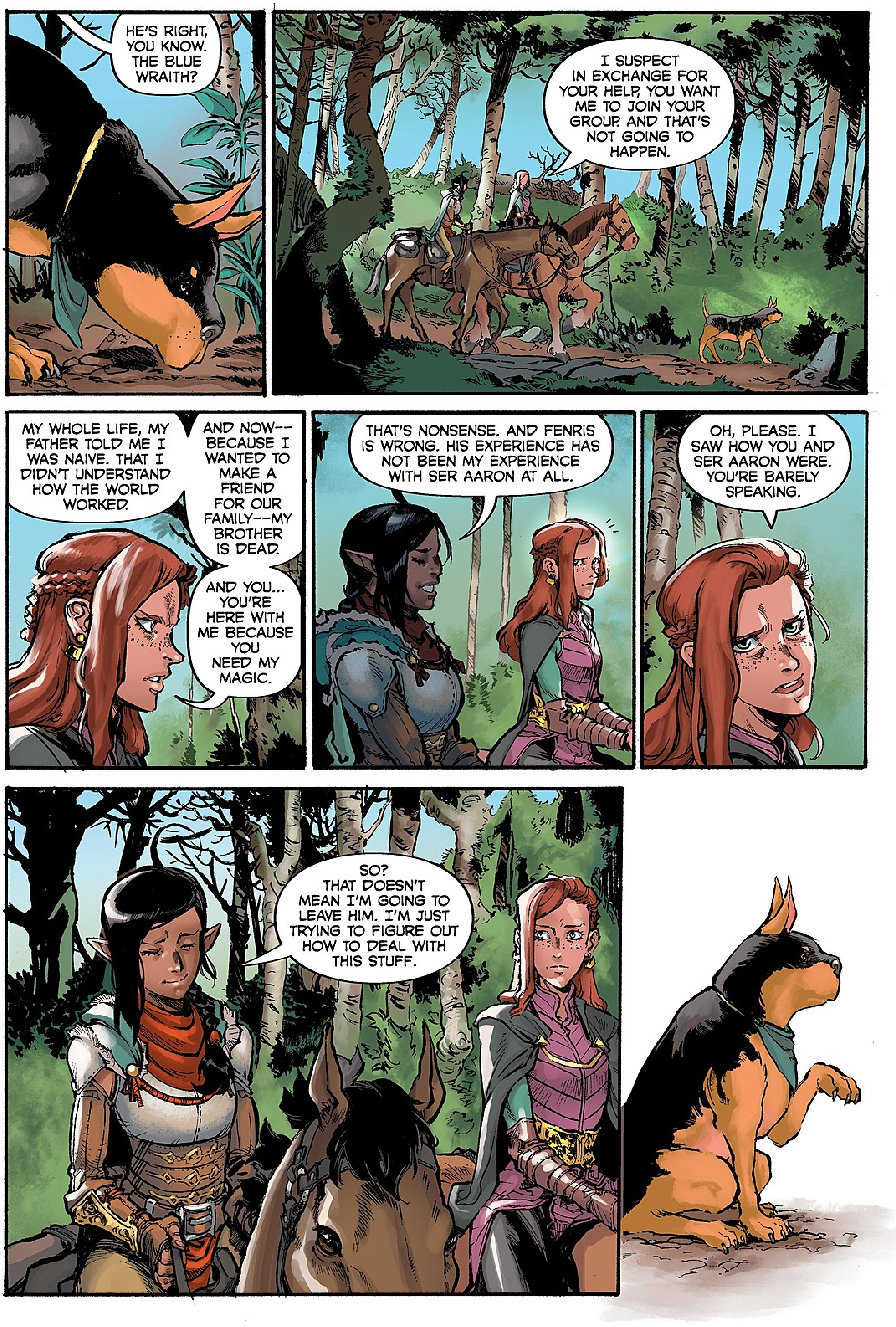

WE'RE NOT HERE TO KILL YOU. WE JUST CAME TO TALK.
AND WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU? I HAVE A TEVINTER MAGE ATTACKING ME.
BECAUSE I CAME WITH HER, AS DID THE MABARI.
AND WE'RE NOT TRYING TO HELP HER, WE'RE TRYING TO STOP THE FIGHT.
THAT...IS SURPRISINGLY LOGICAL.
WHERE IS MY FATHER?!
TOOOOM

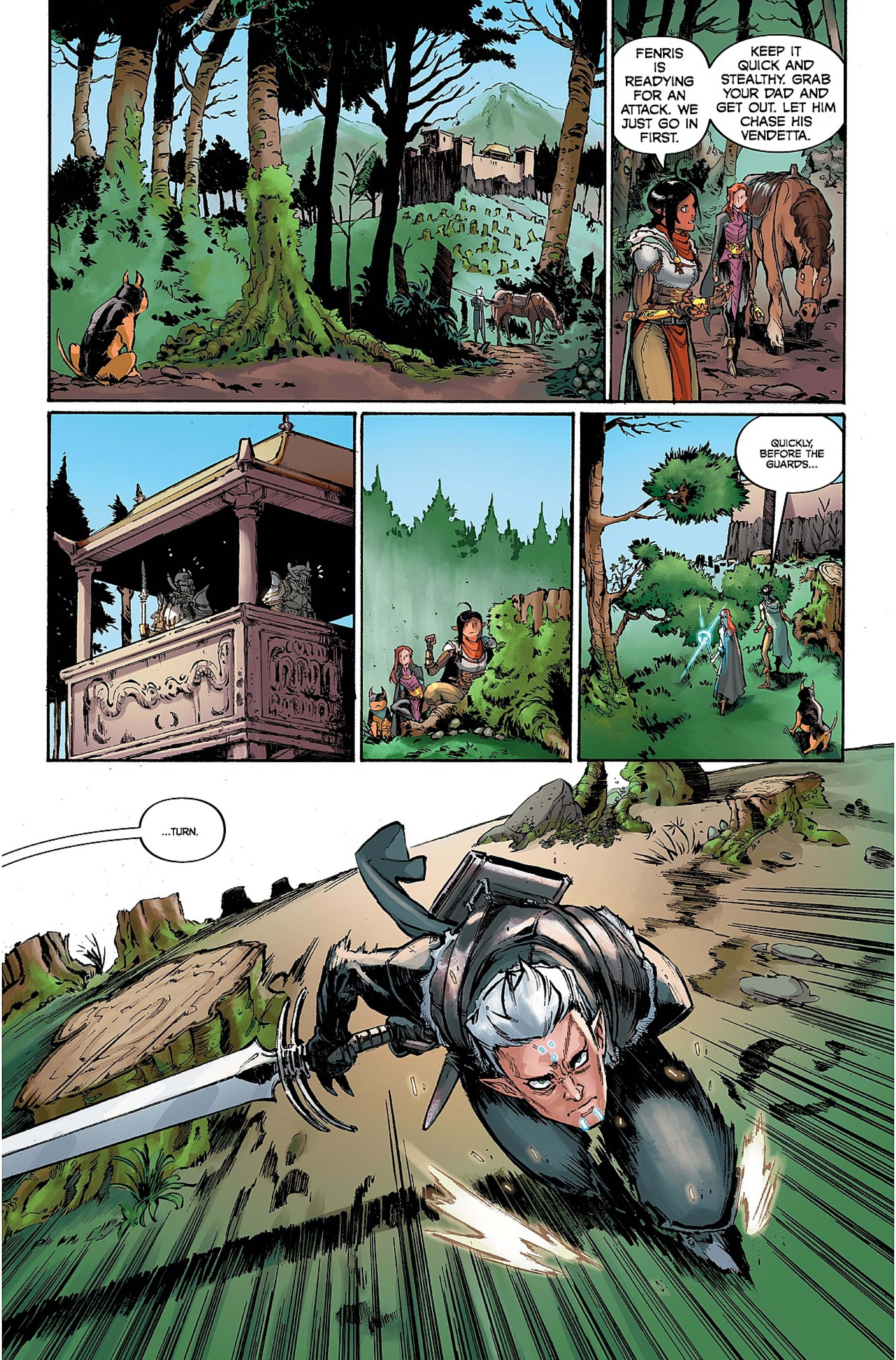

HOW DID--?
YOUR POWER IS IMPRESSIVE. YOU MUST BE THE INVIDUS GIRL.
...YOU'VE HEARD OF ME...?
THE PLANT MAGIC YOU USED IS VERY RARE OUTSIDE OF THE DALISH CLANS.
BUT MY BLAST...
IT KNOCKED VAEA RIGHT THROUGH YOU. HOW...?
THE LYRIUM TATTOOS SOMETIMES MAKE ME MOVE THROUGH THINGS. OR THINGS THROUGH ME.
I CAN'T ALWAYS CONTROL IT.
SO YOU ARE THE BLUE WRAITH.
DID YOU TAKE MY FATHER?
I DID NOT. BUT THE MAN I'M TRACKING DID. A FORMER FRIEND. I'M SURE WE ALL LOOK ALIKE TO PASCALIS, BUT MY FRIEND'S TATTOOS DON'T *GLOW.*
LISTEN, FENRIS--
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT NAME?

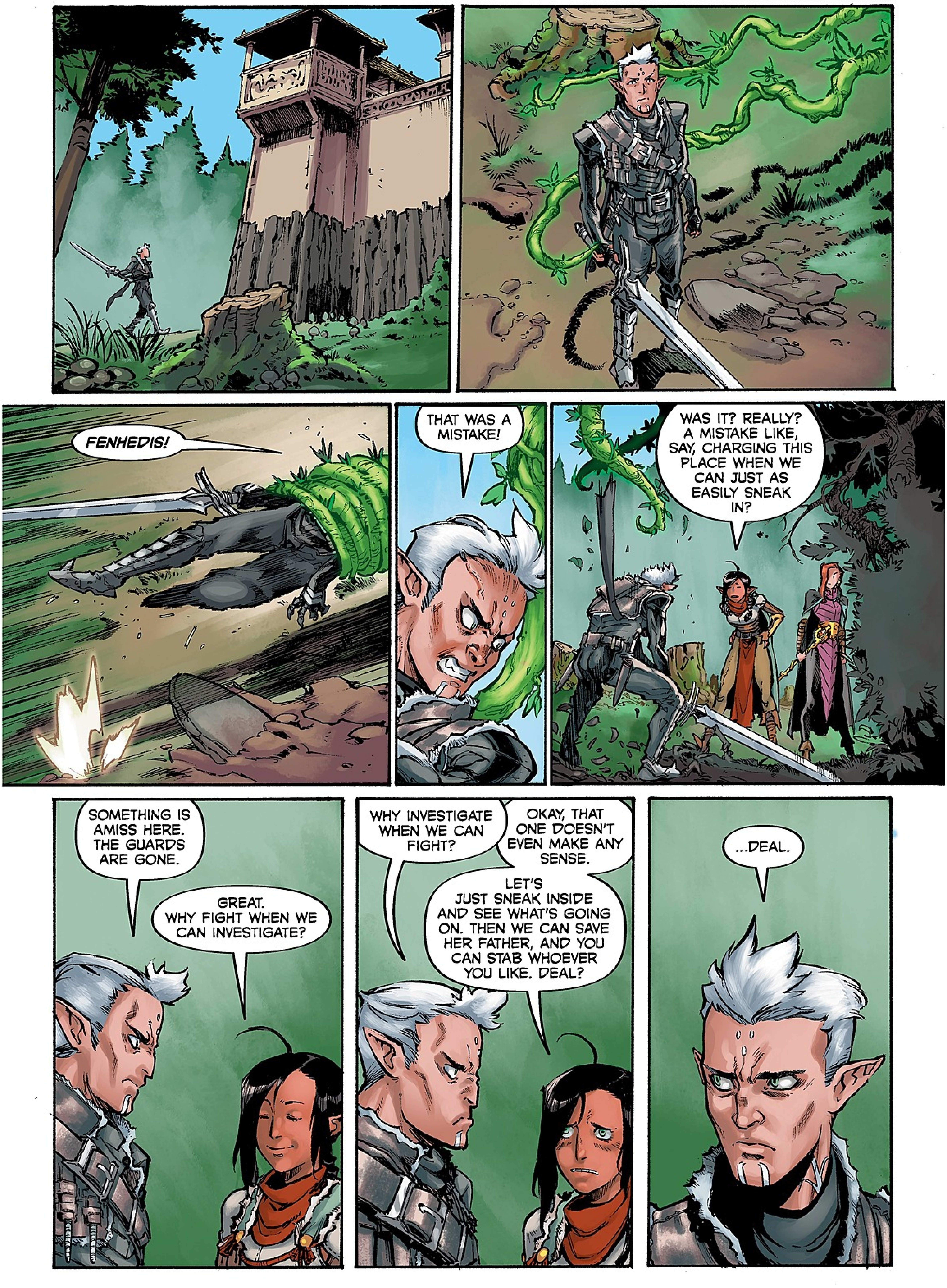

I'M A FRIEND OF VARRIC TETHRAS.
AH YES, PUTTING YOU IN THE RARIFIED COMPANY OF ANYONE WHO'S EVER BOUGHT THAT DWARF A DRINK.
I DID NOT TAKE THE MAGISTER INVIDUS, BECAUSE IF I HAD, HE'D BE DEAD.
HE IS NOT A MAN WORTH SPARING.
MY FATHER IS A POWERFUL--
YES, POWERFUL. A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR WORTHY.
THE MAN IS THE LAST OF THE VENATORI WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS RED LYRIUM. THAT ALONE MAKES HIM WORTH KILLING.
BUT HE DOESN'T DO ANY OF THAT ANYMORE.
BECAUSE THE VENATORI LOST.
THAT IS NOT A CHANGE OF HEART. IT'S A CHANGE OF FORTUNE.
BUT YOUR FATHER IS IN NO DANGER FROM ME SO LONG AS HE'S NOT TRAVELING WITH SHIRALLAS WILLINGLY.
NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME... PASCALIS'S TRACKERS HAVE DELAYED ME LONG ENOUGH. I MUST RESUME THE HUNT.
COME ON. WORK WITH US HERE.
I MEAN, IT'S NOT EVERY DAY, I PASS THROUGH SOMEONE.
REALLY? HAPPENS TO ME ALL THE TIME.

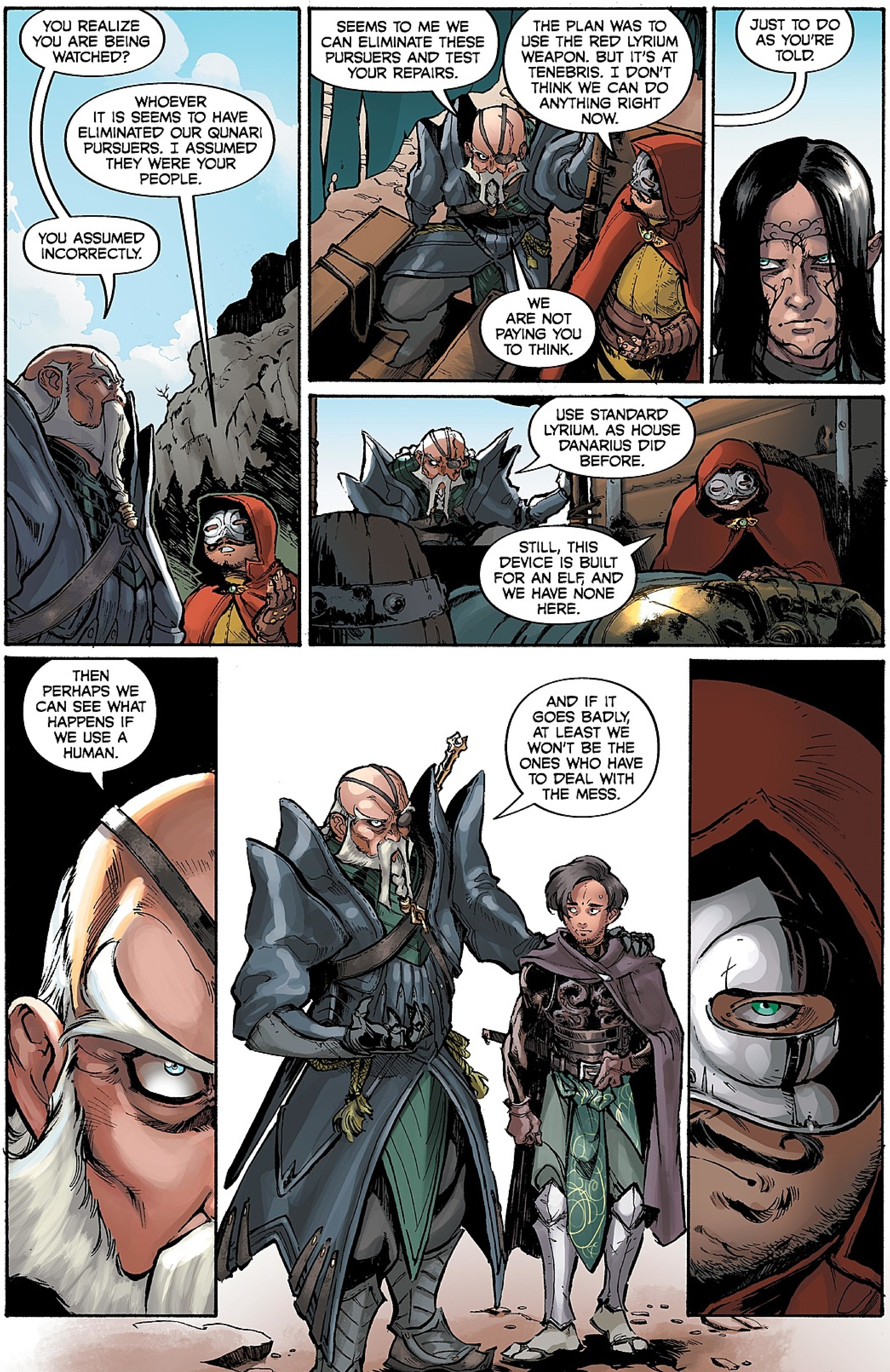

ARE YOU A TRACKER?
YES, BUT NOT A GOOD ENOUGH ONE TO WASTE ANY MORE TIME. I MUST GO NOW.
TRAVEL WITH US, AND GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF MY FRIEND'S FATHER. IF WE WORK TOGETHER, THIS MABARI CAN TRACK YOUR FORMER FRIEND.
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SHE CAN DO THIS. I HAVE LONG ADMIRED THE STRENGTH--AND SKILL--OF THE MABARI.
AND YOU APPEAR TO BE A VERY GOOD GIRL.
YES. YOU ARE.
YES. YOU CERTAINLY ARE, AREN'T YOU?
BUT I WILL NOT BE MAKING AN ALLIANCE THIS DAY. I DO NOT HAVE PARTNERS, NOR TEAMMATES, ANY LONGER.
VARRIC TOLD ME THAT BACK IN YOUR KIRKWALL DAYS, YOU WERE PRETTY CLOSE TO YOUR TEAM.
AND WHAT GOOD DID IT DO ME? AS SOON AS THE UPRISING BEGAN, WE ALL WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
PEOPLE ONLY USE YOU FOR AS LONG AS THEY NEED YOUR POWER. AND THEN THEY LEAVE YOU. AS I LEAVE YOU NOW.
ENOUGH WITH THE FIGHTING.
BUT HE'LL KILL MY FATHER...
NOT IF WE FOLLOW HIM.
AUTUMN, WE NEED YOU TO TRACK THE BROODY GUY.

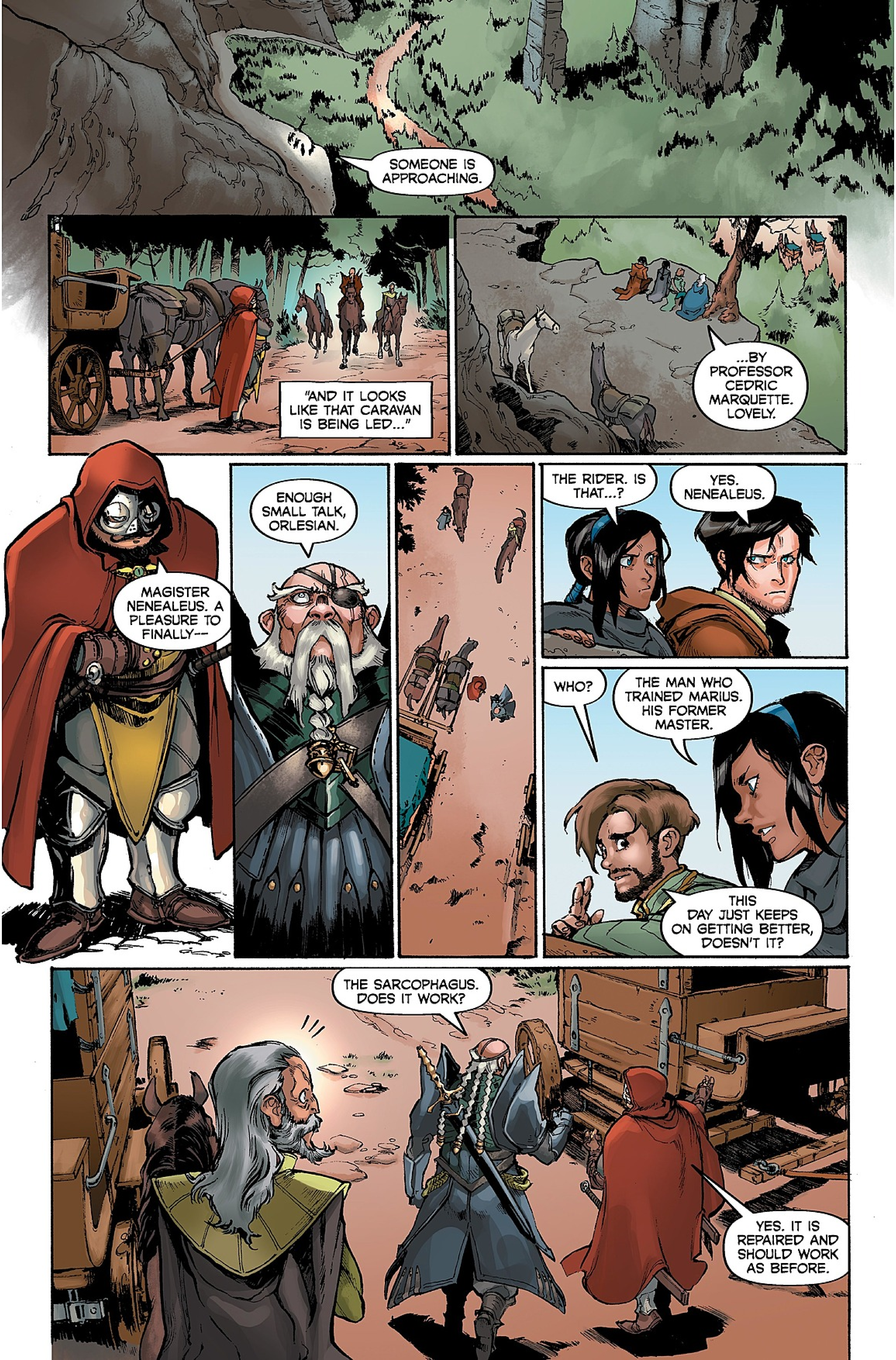

THE BOY IS ANGRY.
SHOULD I TALK WITH HIM?
NOT MUCH OF A TALKER, ARE YOU, MARIUS?
RIGHT. I'LL GO.
CARE TO TALK?
AUTUMN...SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO STICK WITH ME.
IT WAS OLIVIA'S DYING WISH. I KNOW.
BUT A MABARI IS A NOBLE CREATURE. IT NEEDS A SENSE OF PURPOSE.
THAT AUTUMN STAYED WITH OLIVIA WAS ONE OF THE REASONS I KNEW SHE WAS GOOD. THAT SHE WAS CAPABLE OF...
OF SACRIFICING HER LIFE FOR THE GREATER GOOD?
WELL, MAYBE THE MABARI WAS RIGHT TO LEAVE. I'M JUST NOT BUILT FOR THAT.
NOT EVERYONE IS.
THEY'VE STOPPED. ANY IDEA WHY?
UNCLEAR.
THEY MAY BE MEETING SOMEONE.

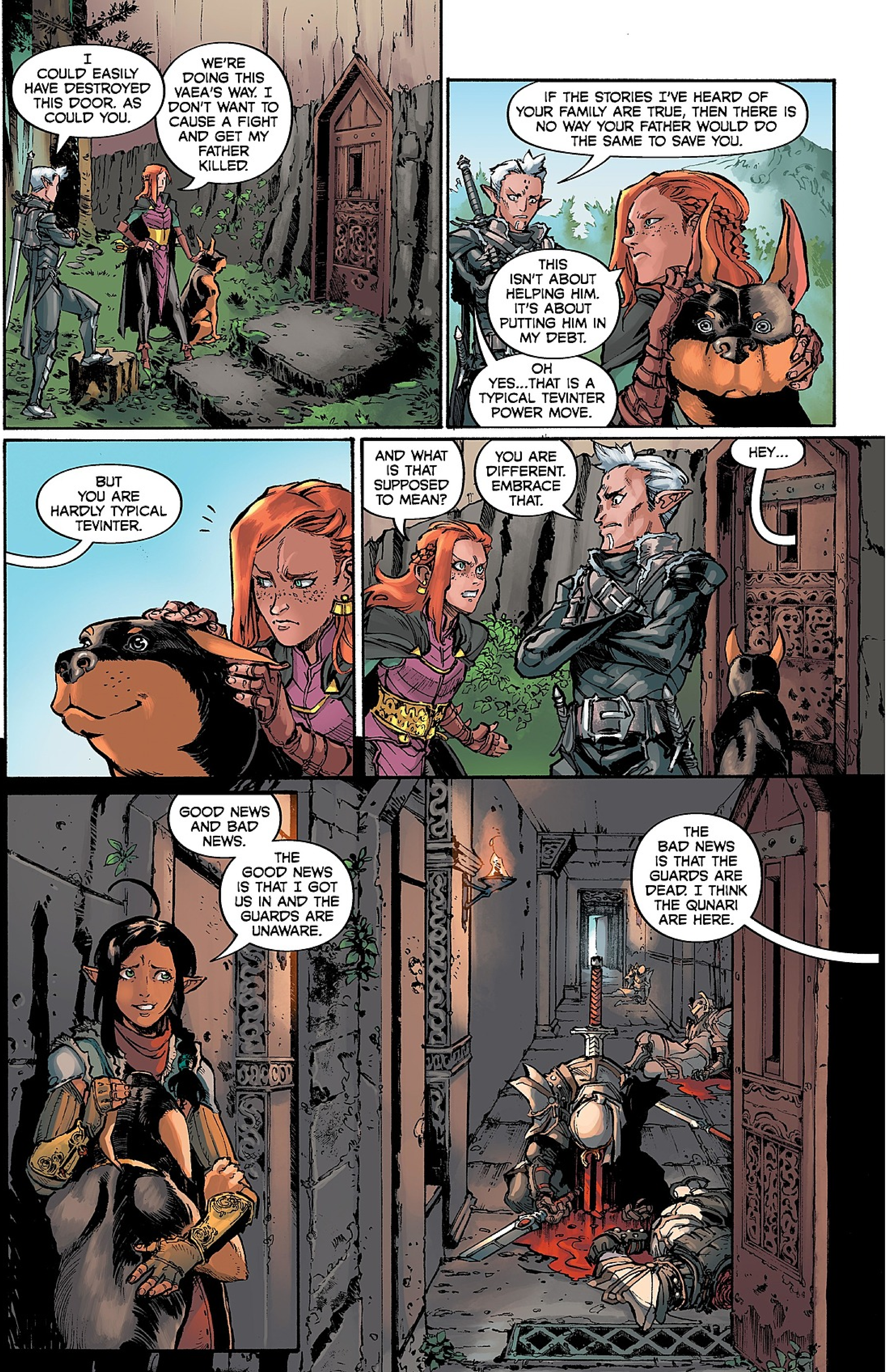

HE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW. THE BLUE WRAITH?
I SUSPECT IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR HELP, YOU WANT ME TO JOIN YOUR GROUP. AND THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
MY WHOLE LIFE, MY FATHER TOLD ME I WAS NAIVE. THAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE WORLD WORKED.
AND NOW-- BECAUSE I WANTED TO MAKE A FRIEND FOR OUR FAMILY--MY BROTHER IS DEAD.
AND YOU... YOU'RE HERE WITH ME BECAUSE YOU NEED MY MAGIC.
THAT'S NONSENSE. AND FENRIS IS WRONG. HIS EXPERIENCE HAS NOT BEEN MY EXPERIENCE WITH SER AARON AT ALL.
OH, PLEASE. I SAW HOW YOU AND SER AARON WERE. YOU'RE BARELY SPEAKING.
SO? THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M GOING TO LEAVE HIM. I'M JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS STUFF.

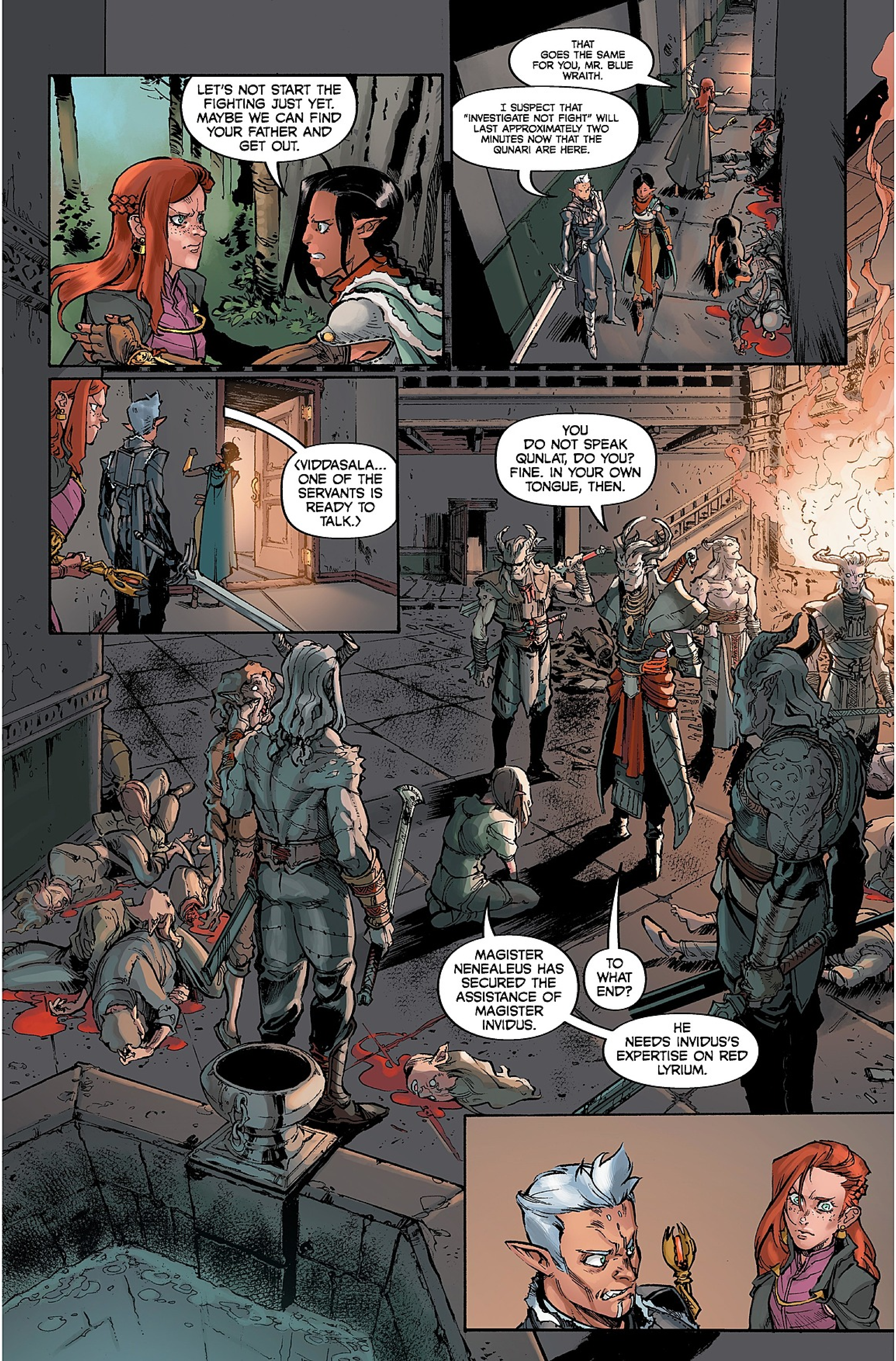

FENRIS IS READYING FOR AN ATTACK. WE JUST GO IN FIRST.
KEEP IT QUICK AND STEALTHY. GRAB YOUR DAD AND GET OUT. LET HIM CHASE HIS VENDETTA.
QUICKLY, BEFORE THE GUARDS...
...TURN.

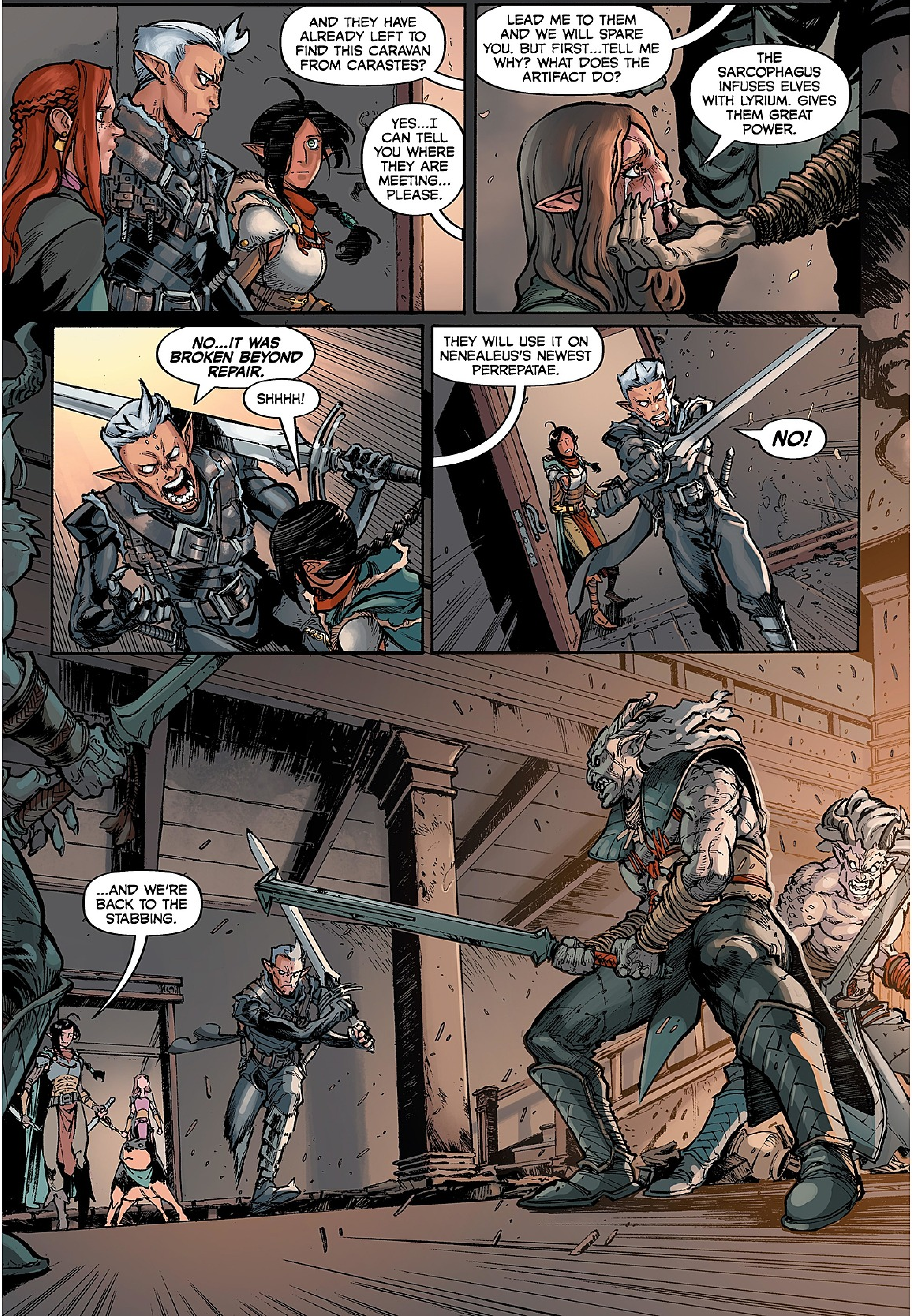

FENHEDIS!
THAT WAS A MISTAKE!
WAS IT? REALLY? A MISTAKE LIKE, SAY, CHARGING THIS PLACE WHEN WE CAN JUST AS EASILY SNEAK IN?
SOMETHING IS AMISS HERE. THE GUARDS ARE GONE.
GREAT. WHY FIGHT WHEN WE CAN INVESTIGATE?
WHY INVESTIGATE WHEN WE CAN FIGHT?
OKAY, THAT ONE DOESN'T EVEN MAKE ANY SENSE.
LET'S JUST SNEAK INSIDE AND SEE WHAT'S GOING ON. THEN WE CAN SAVE HER FATHER, AND YOU CAN STAB WHOEVER YOU LIKE. DEAL?
...DEAL.

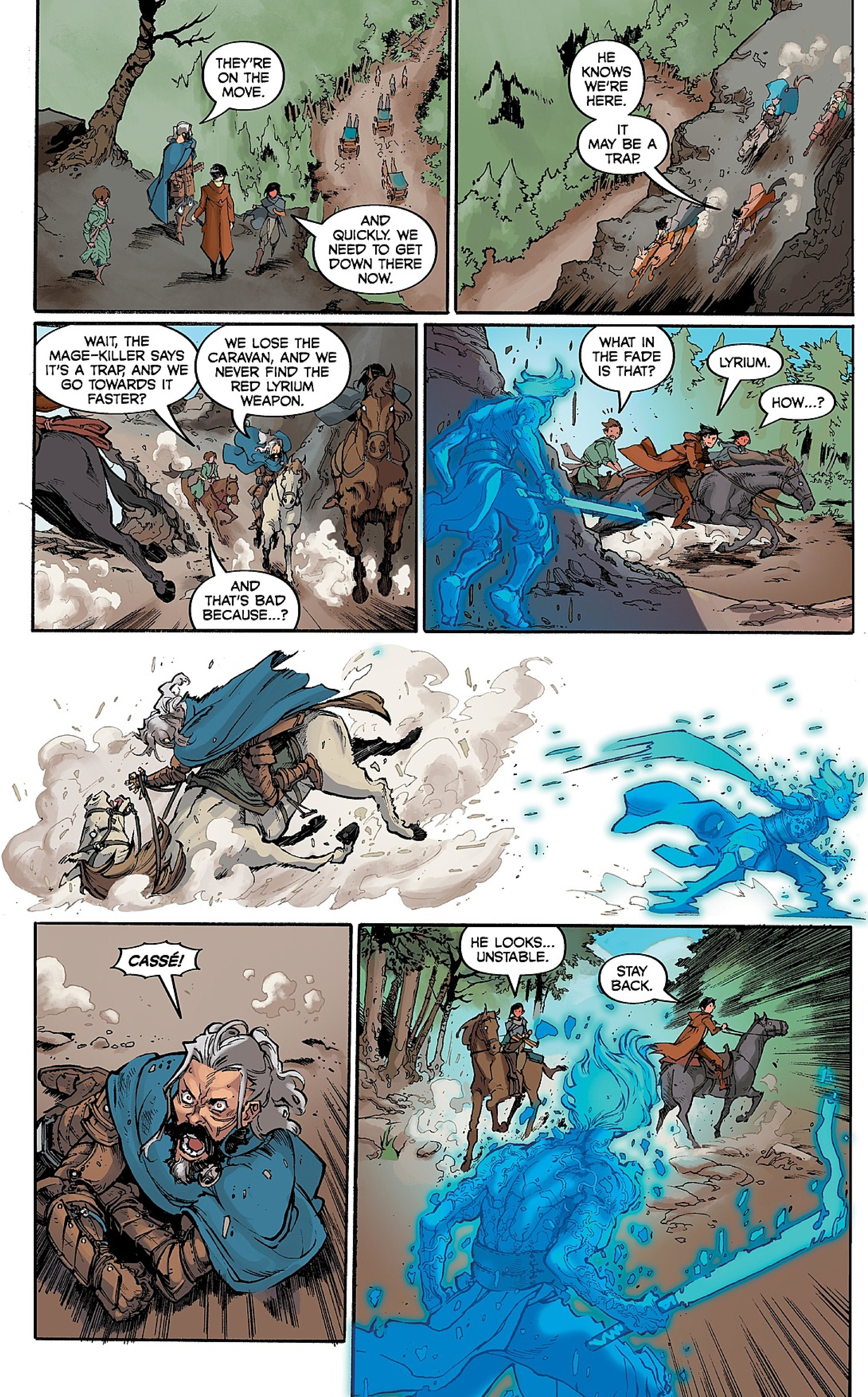

YOU REALIZE YOU ARE BEING WATCHED?
WHOEVER IT IS SEEMS TO HAVE ELIMINATED OUR QUNARI PURSUERS. I ASSUMED THEY WERE YOUR PEOPLE.
YOU ASSUMED INCORRECTLY.
SEEMS TO ME WE CAN ELIMINATE THESE PURSUERS AND TEST YOUR REPAIRS.
THE PLAN WAS TO USE THE RED LYRIUM WEAPON. BUT IT'S AT TENEBRIS. I DON'T THINK WE CAN DO ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.
WE ARE NOT PAYING YOU TO THINK.
JUST TO DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
USE STANDARD LYRIUM. AS HOUSE DANARIUS DID BEFORE.
STILL, THIS DEVICE IS BUILT FOR AN ELF, AND WE HAVE NONE HERE.
THEN PERHAPS WE CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF WE USE A HUMAN.
AND IF IT GOES BADLY, AT LEAST WE WON'T BE THE ONES WHO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE MESS.

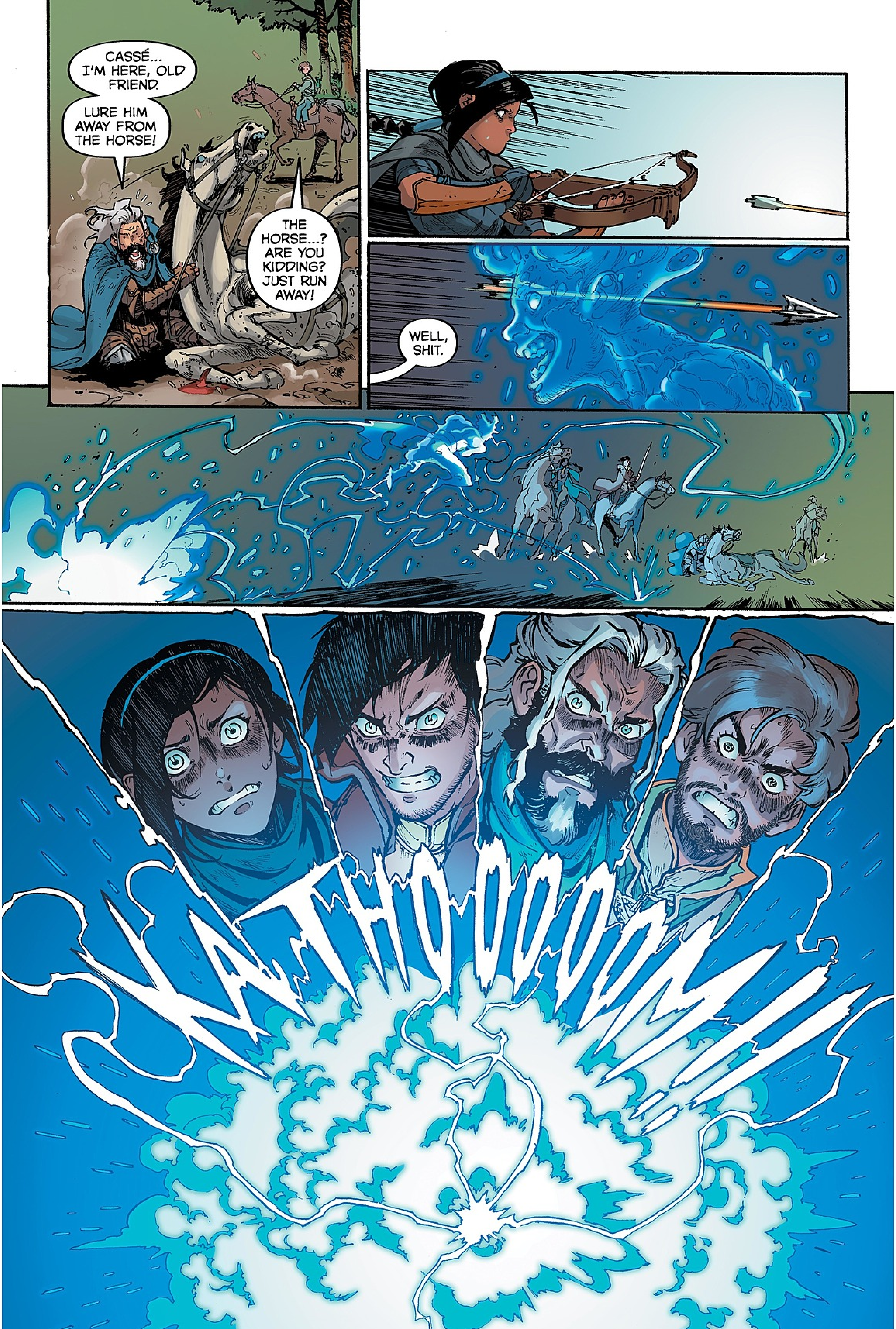

SOMEONE IS APPROACHING.
"AND IT LOOKS LIKE THAT CARAVAN IS BEING LED..."
...BY PROFESSOR CEDRIC MARQUETTE. LOVELY.
MAGISTER NENEALEUS. A PLEASURE TO FINALLY--
ENOUGH SMALL TALK, ORLESIAN.
THE RIDER. IS THAT...?
YES. NENEALEUS.
WHO?
THE MAN WHO TRAINED MARIUS. HIS FORMER MASTER.
THIS DAY JUST KEEPS ON GETTING BETTER, DOESN'T IT?
THE SARCOPHAGUS. DOES IT WORK?
!!
YES. IT IS REPAIRED AND SHOULD WORK AS BEFORE.

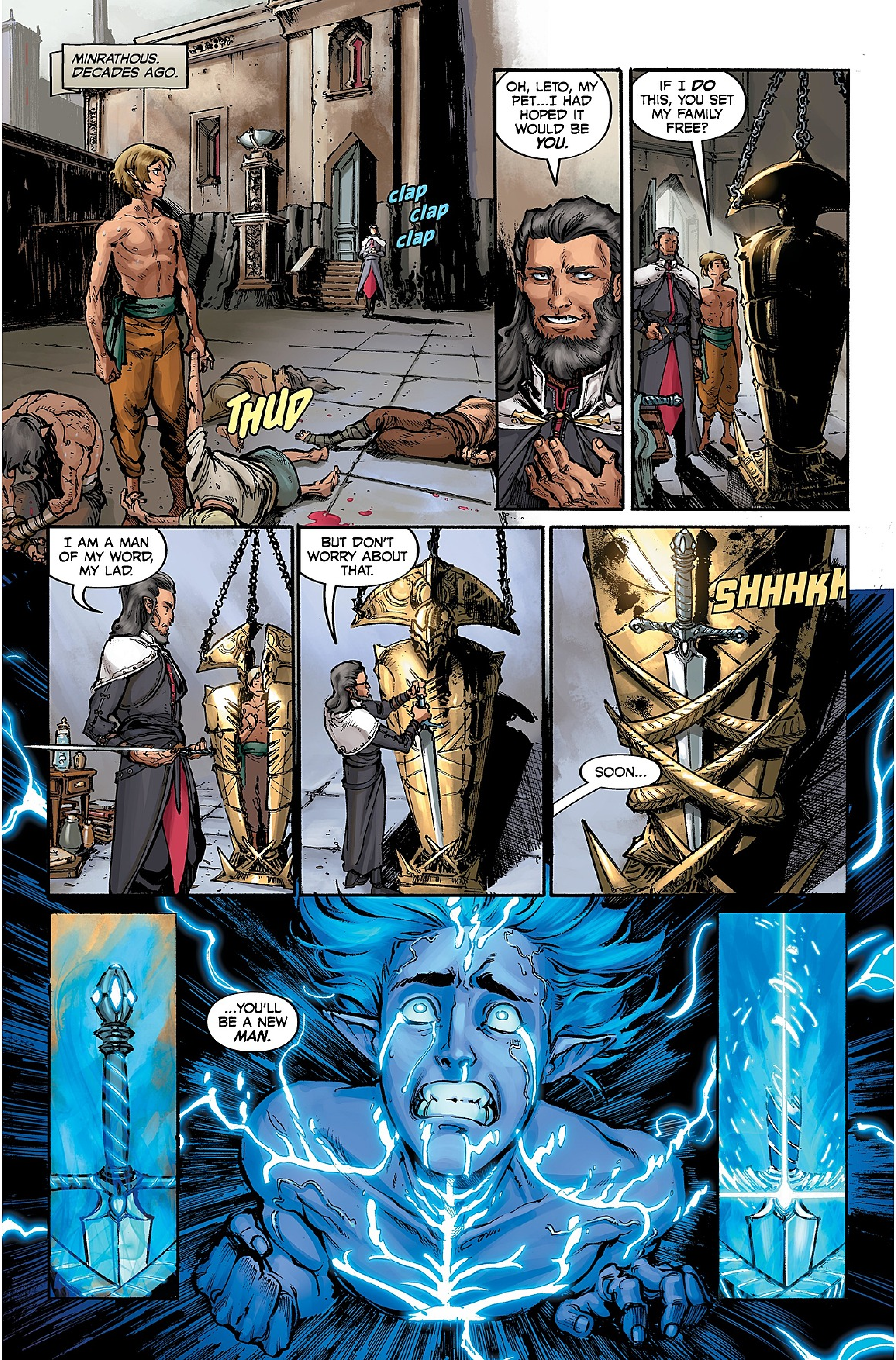

I COULD EASILY HAVE DESTROYED THIS DOOR. AS COULD YOU.
WE'RE DOING THIS VAEA'S WAY. I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE A FIGHT AND GET MY FATHER KILLED.
IF THE STORIES I'VE HEARD OF YOUR FAMILY ARE TRUE, THEN THERE IS NO WAY YOUR FATHER WOULD DO THE SAME TO SAVE YOU.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT HELPING HIM. IT'S ABOUT PUTTING HIM IN MY DEBT.
OH YES...THAT IS A TYPICAL TEVINTER POWER MOVE.
BUT YOU ARE HARDLY TYPICAL TEVINTER.
AND WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
YOU ARE DIFFERENT. EMBRACE THAT.
HEY...
GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS.
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I GOT US IN AND THE GUARDS ARE UNAWARE.
THE BAD NEWS IS THAT THE GUARDS ARE DEAD. I THINK THE QUNARI ARE HERE.

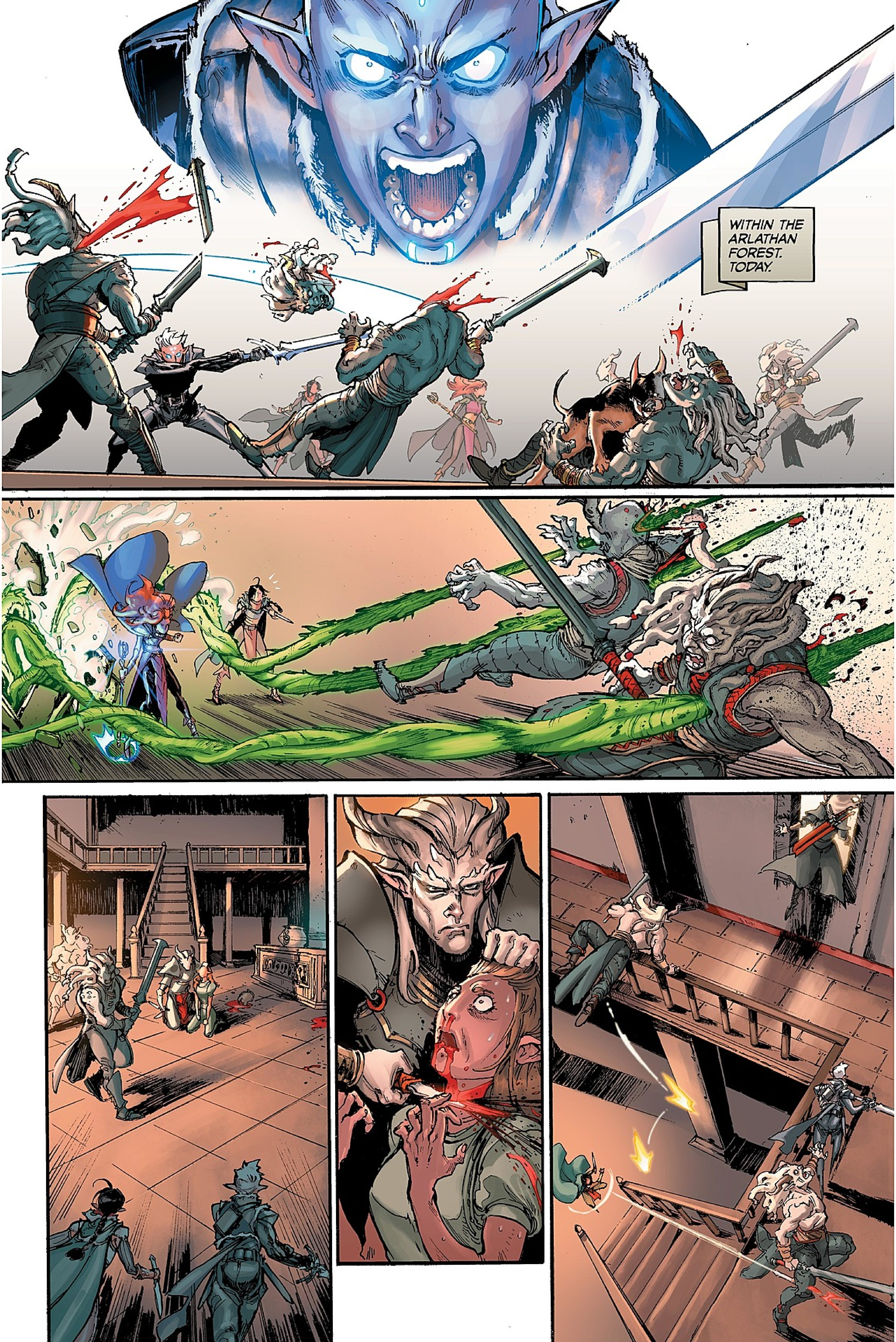

LET'S NOT START THE FIGHTING JUST YET. MAYBE WE CAN FIND YOUR FATHER AND GET OUT.
THAT GOES THE SAME FOR YOU, MR. BLUE WRAITH.
I SUSPECT THAT "INVESTIGATE NOT FIGHT" WILL LAST APPROXIMATELY TWO MINUTES NOW THAT THE QUNARI ARE HERE.
‹VIDDASALA... ONE OF THE SERVANTS IS READY TO TALK.›
YOU DO NOT SPEAK QUNLAT, DO YOU? FINE. IN YOUR OWN TONGUE, THEN.
MAGISTER NENEALEUS HAS SECURED THE ASSISTANCE OF MAGISTER INVIDUS.
TO WHAT END?
HE NEEDS INVIDUS'S EXPERTISE ON RED LYRIUM.

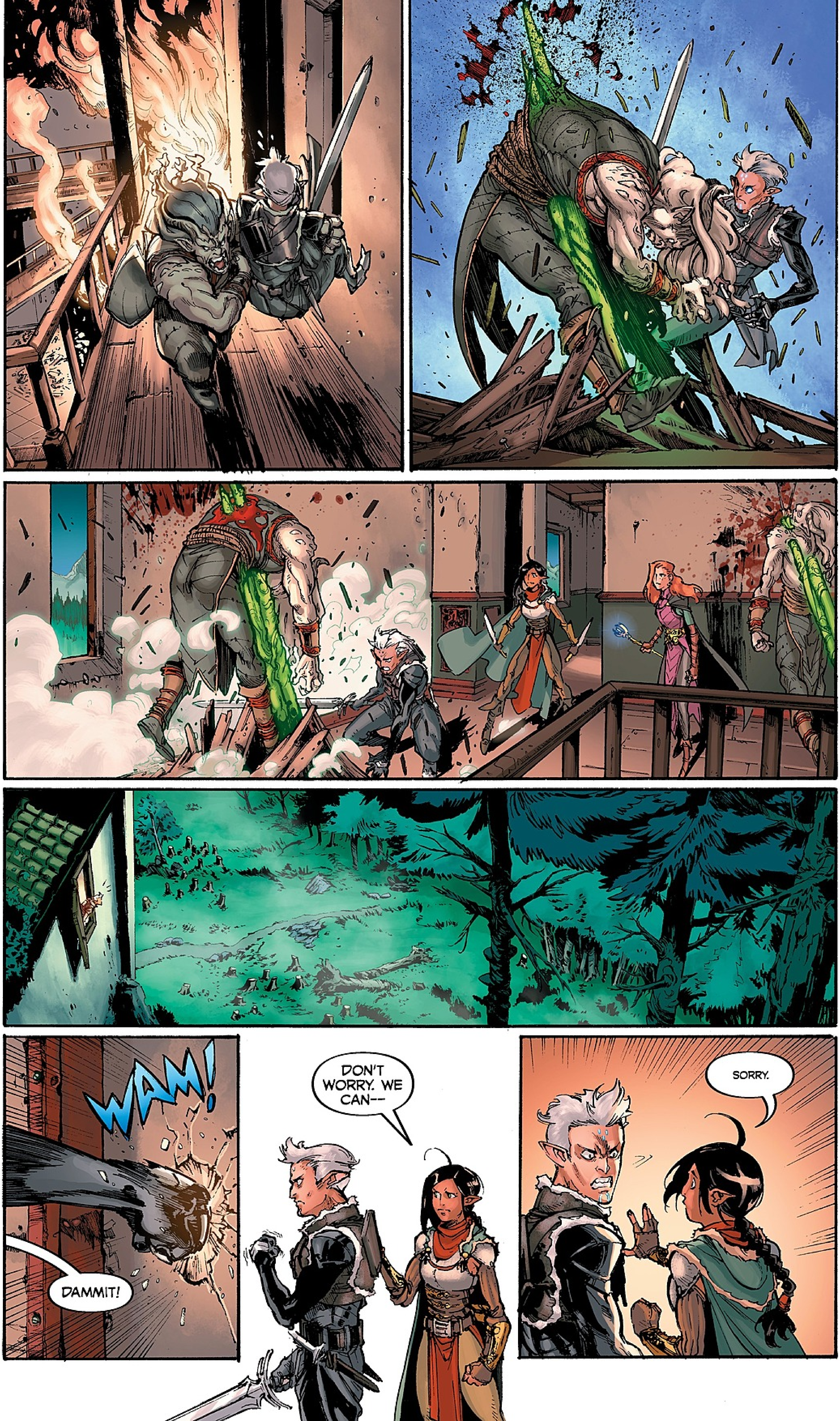

AND THEY HAVE ALREADY LEFT TO FIND THIS CARAVAN FROM CARASTES?
YES...I CAN TELL YOU WHERE THEY ARE MEETING... PLEASE.
LEAD ME TO THEM AND WE WILL SPARE YOU. BUT FIRST...TELL ME WHY? WHAT DOES THE ARTIFACT DO?
THE SARCOPHAGUS INFUSES ELVES WITH LYRIUM. GIVES THEM GREAT POWER.
NO...IT WAS BROKEN BEYOND REPAIR.
SHHHH!
THEY WILL USE IT ON NENEALEUS'S NEWEST PERREPATAE.
NO!
...AND WE'RE BACK TO THE STABBING.

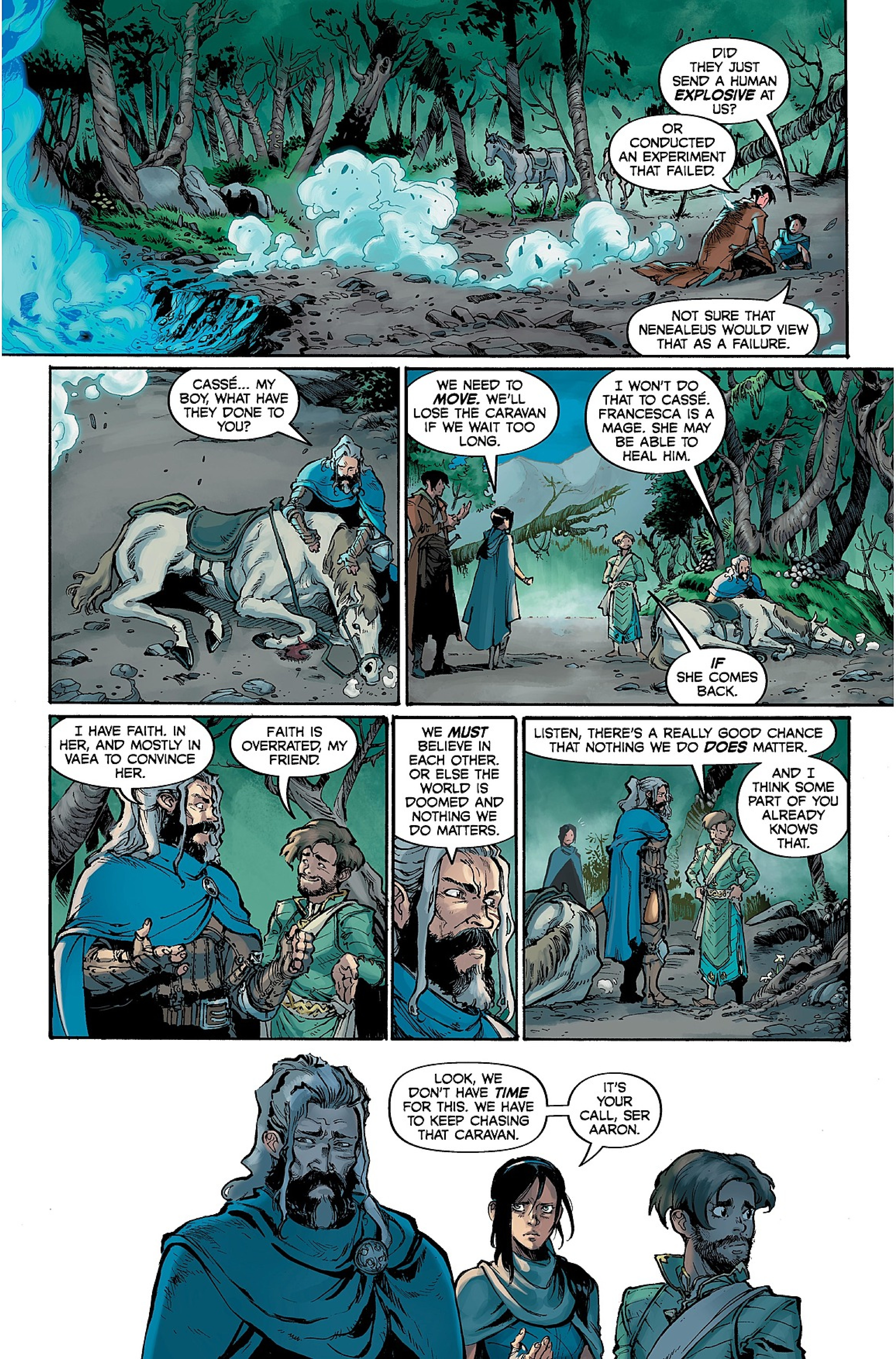

THEY'RE ON THE MOVE.
AND QUICKLY. WE NEED TO GET DOWN THERE NOW.
HE KNOWS WE'RE HERE.
IT MAY BE A TRAP.
WAIT, THE MAGE-KILLER SAYS IT'S A TRAP, AND WE GO TOWARDS IT FASTER?
WE LOSE THE CARAVAN, AND WE NEVER FIND THE RED LYRIUM WEAPON.
AND THAT'S BAD BECAUSE...?
WHAT IN THE FADE IS THAT?
LYRIUM.
HOW...?
CASSÉ!
HE LOOKS... UNSTABLE.
STAY BACK.

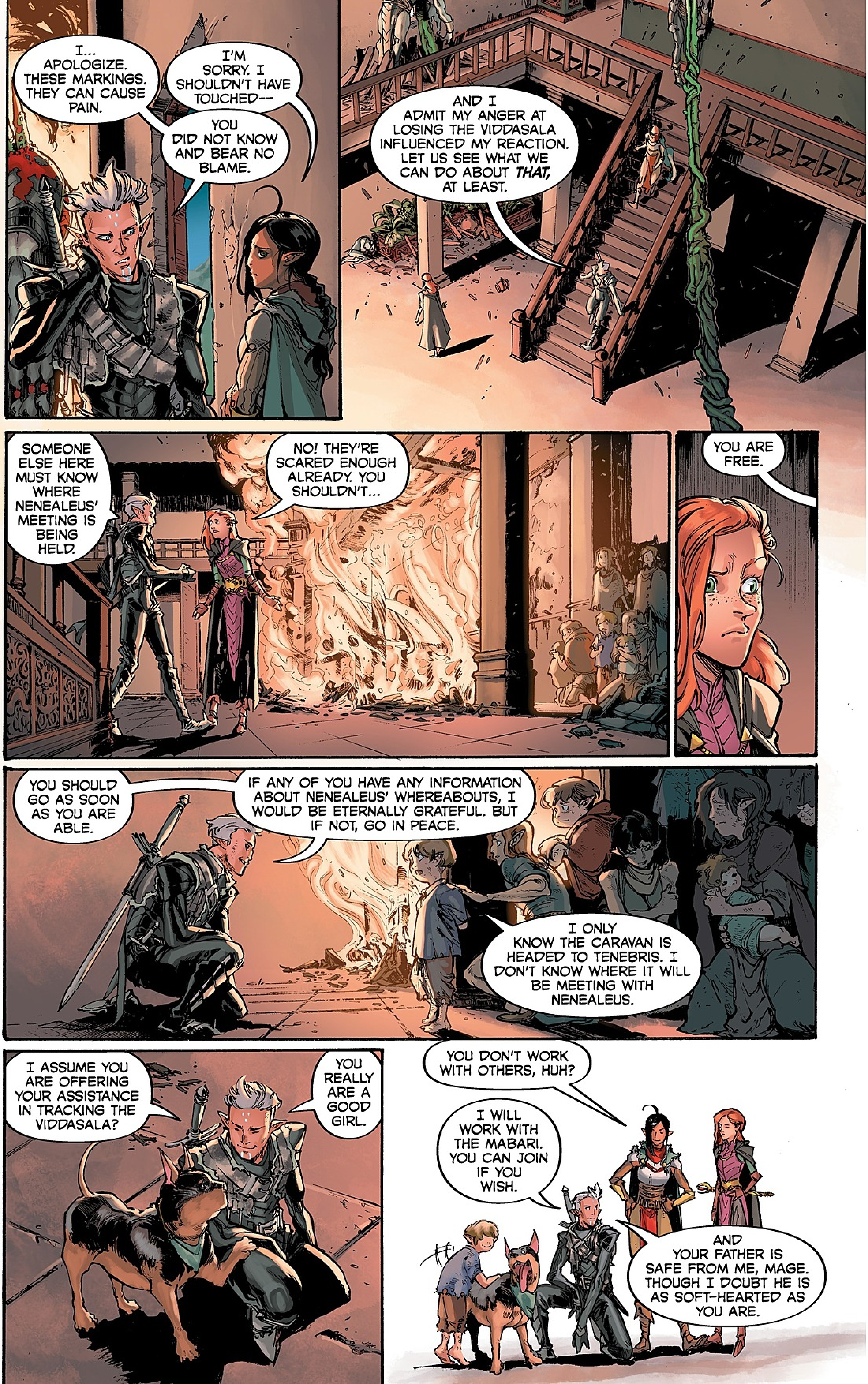

CASSÉ... I'M HERE, OLD FRIEND.
LURE HIM AWAY FROM THE HORSE!
THE HORSE...? ARE YOU KIDDING? JUST RUN AWAY!
WELL, SHIT.
KATHOOOOOM!!

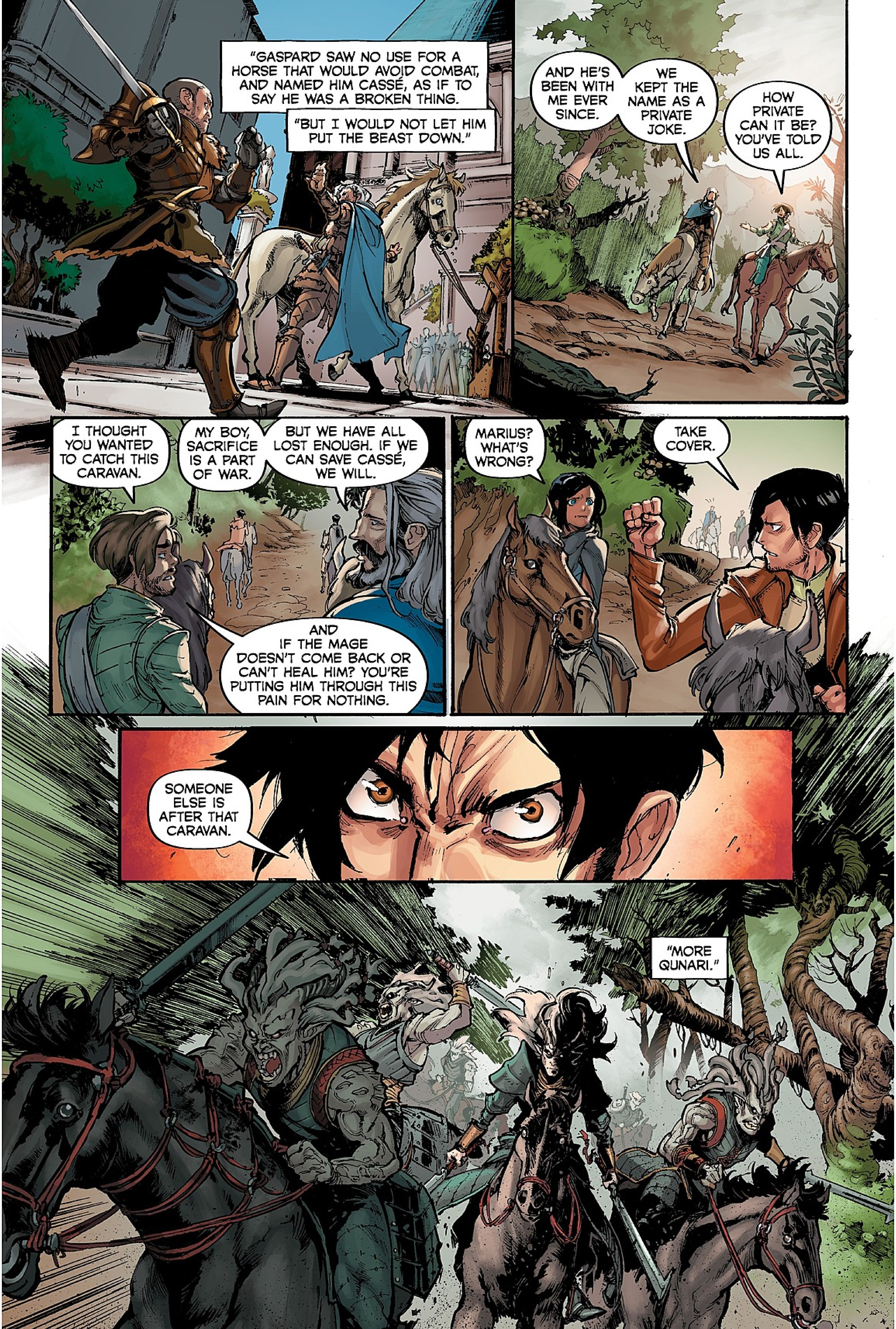

MINRATHOUS. DECADES AGO.
clap clap clap
THUD
OH, LETO, MY PET...I HAD HOPED IT WOULD BE *YOU.*
IF I *DO* THIS, YOU SET MY FAMILY FREE?
I AM A MAN OF MY WORD, MY LAD.
BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
SHHHKK
SOON...
...YOU'LL BE A NEW *MAN.*

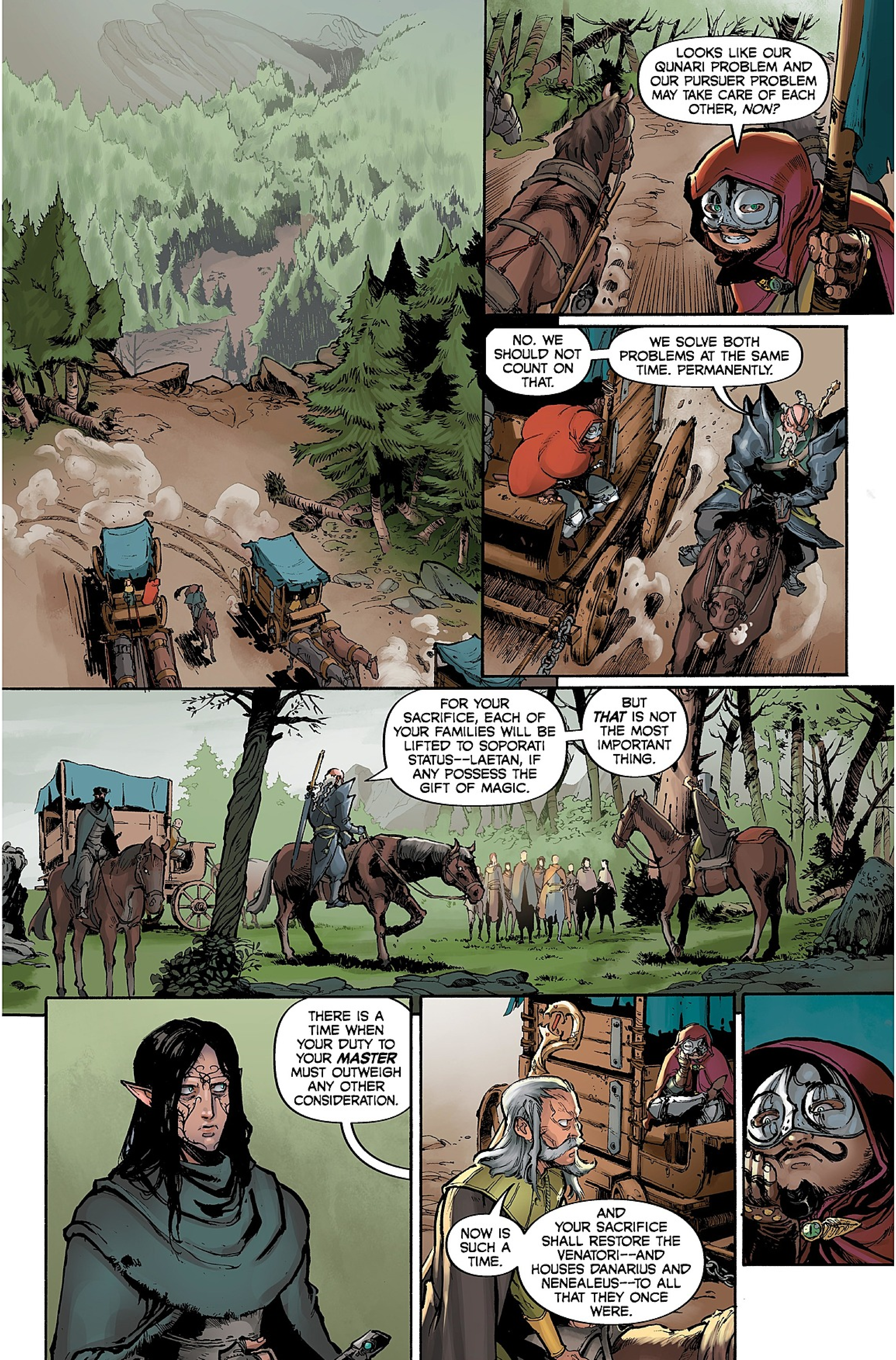

WITHIN THE ARLATHAN FOREST. TODAY.

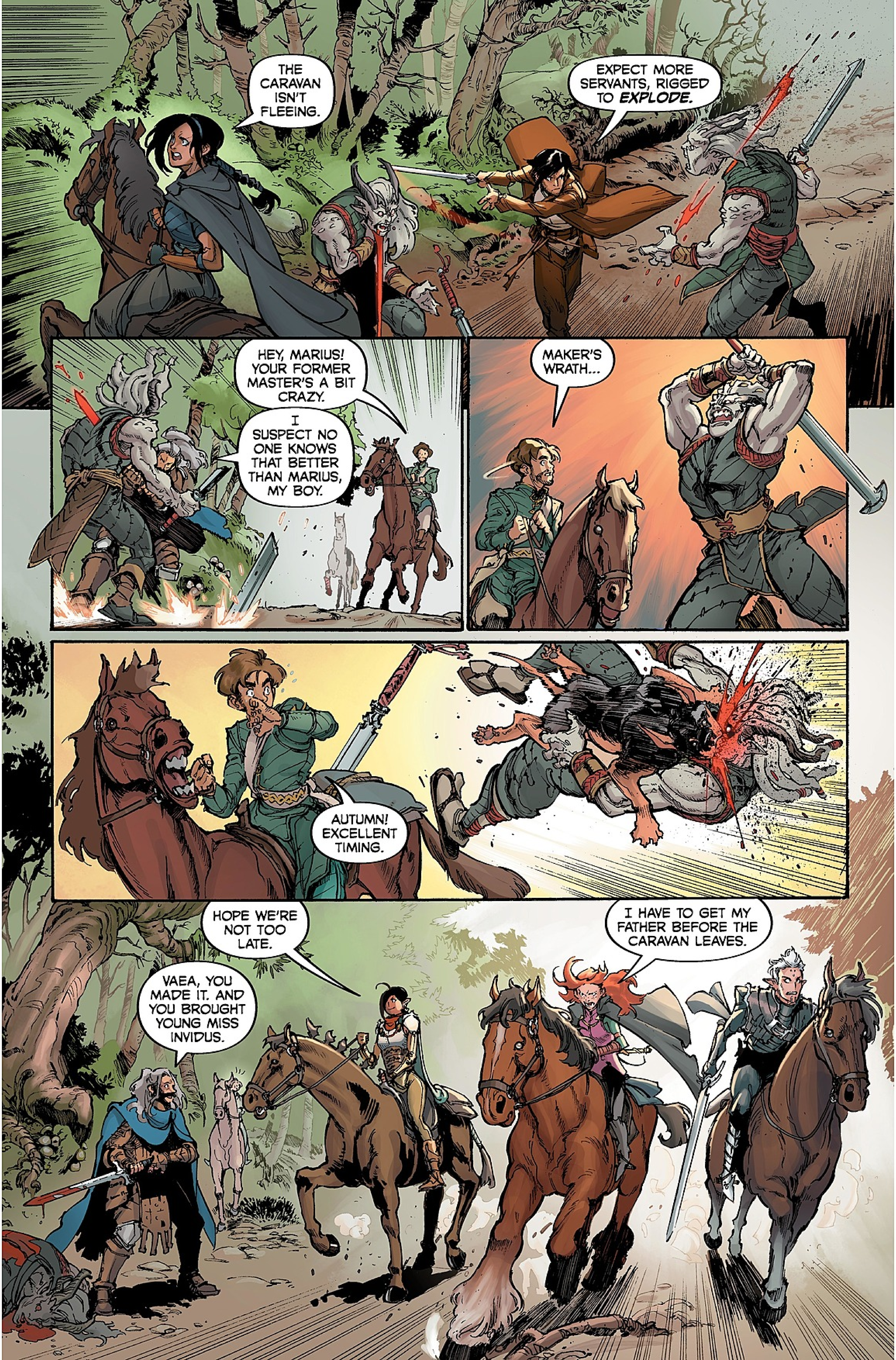

WAM!
DAMMIT!
DON'T WORRY. WE CAN--
SORRY.

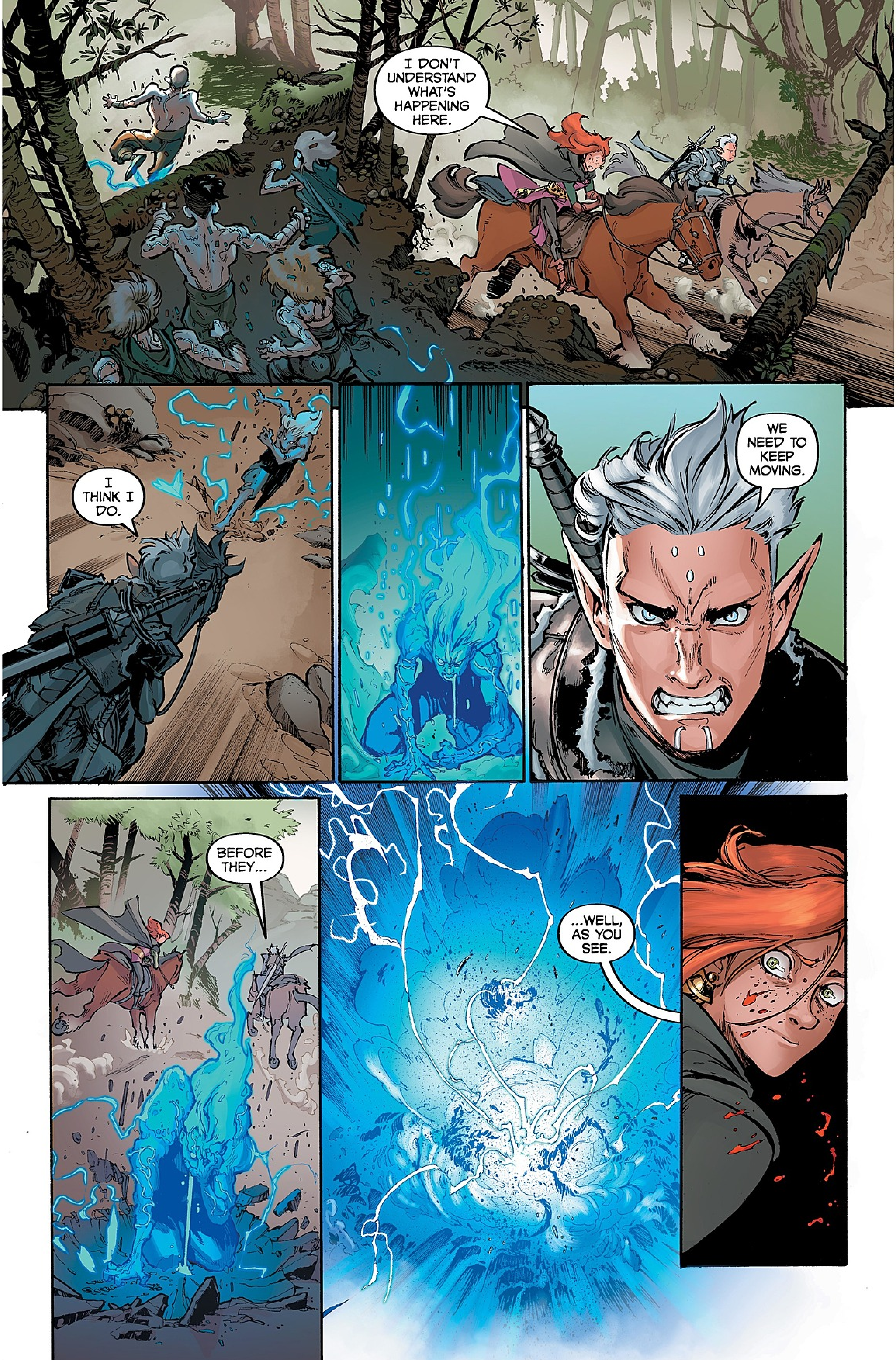

DID THEY JUST SEND A HUMAN *EXPLOSIVE* AT US?
OR CONDUCTED AN EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED.
NOT SURE THAT NENEALEUS WOULD VIEW THAT AS A FAILURE.
CASSÉ... MY BOY, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?
WE NEED TO *MOVE.* WE'LL LOSE THE CARAVAN IF WE WAIT TOO LONG.
I WON'T DO THAT TO CASSÉ. FRANCESCA IS A MAGE. SHE MAY BE ABLE TO HEAL HIM.
IF SHE COMES BACK.
I HAVE FAITH. IN HER, AND MOSTLY IN VAEA TO CONVINCE HER.
FAITH IS OVERRATED, MY FRIEND.
WE *MUST* BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER. OR ELSE THE WORLD IS DOOMED AND NOTHING WE DO MATTERS.
LISTEN, THERE'S A REALLY GOOD CHANCE THAT NOTHING WE DO *DOES* MATTER.
AND I THINK SOME PART OF YOU ALREADY KNOWS THAT.
LOOK, WE DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR THIS. WE HAVE TO KEEP CHASING THAT CARAVAN.
IT'S YOUR CALL, SER AARON.

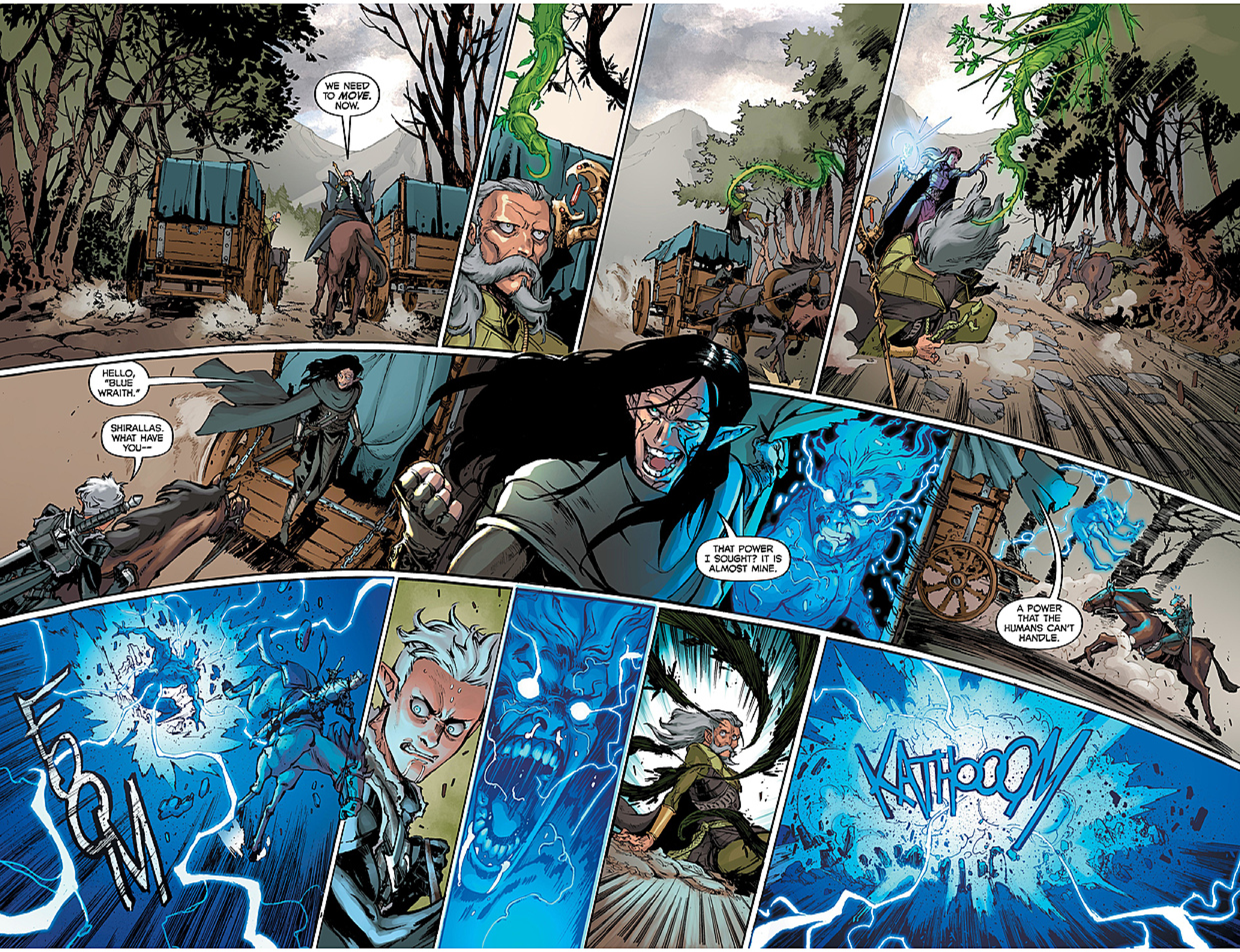

I... APOLOGIZE. THESE MARKINGS. THEY CAN CAUSE PAIN.
I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TOUCHED--
YOU DID NOT KNOW AND BEAR NO BLAME.
AND I ADMIT MY ANGER AT LOSING THE VIDDASALA INFLUENCED MY REACTION. LET US SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT *THAT,* AT LEAST.
SOMEONE ELSE HERE MUST KNOW WHERE NENEALEUS' MEETING IS BEING HELD.
NO! THEY'RE SCARED ENOUGH ALREADY. YOU SHOULDN'T...
YOU ARE FREE.
YOU SHOULD GO AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE.
IF ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT NENEALEUS' WHEREABOUTS, I WOULD BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL. BUT IF NOT, GO IN PEACE.
I ONLY KNOW THE CARAVAN IS HEADED TO TENEBRIS. I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT WILL BE MEETING WITH NENEALEUS.
I ASSUME YOU ARE OFFERING YOUR ASSISTANCE IN TRACKING THE VIDDASALA?
YOU REALLY ARE A GOOD GIRL.
YOU DON'T WORK WITH OTHERS, HUH?
I WILL WORK WITH THE MABARI. YOU CAN JOIN IF YOU WISH.
AND YOUR FATHER IS SAFE FROM ME, MAGE. THOUGH I DOUBT HE IS AS SOFT-HEARTED AS YOU ARE.

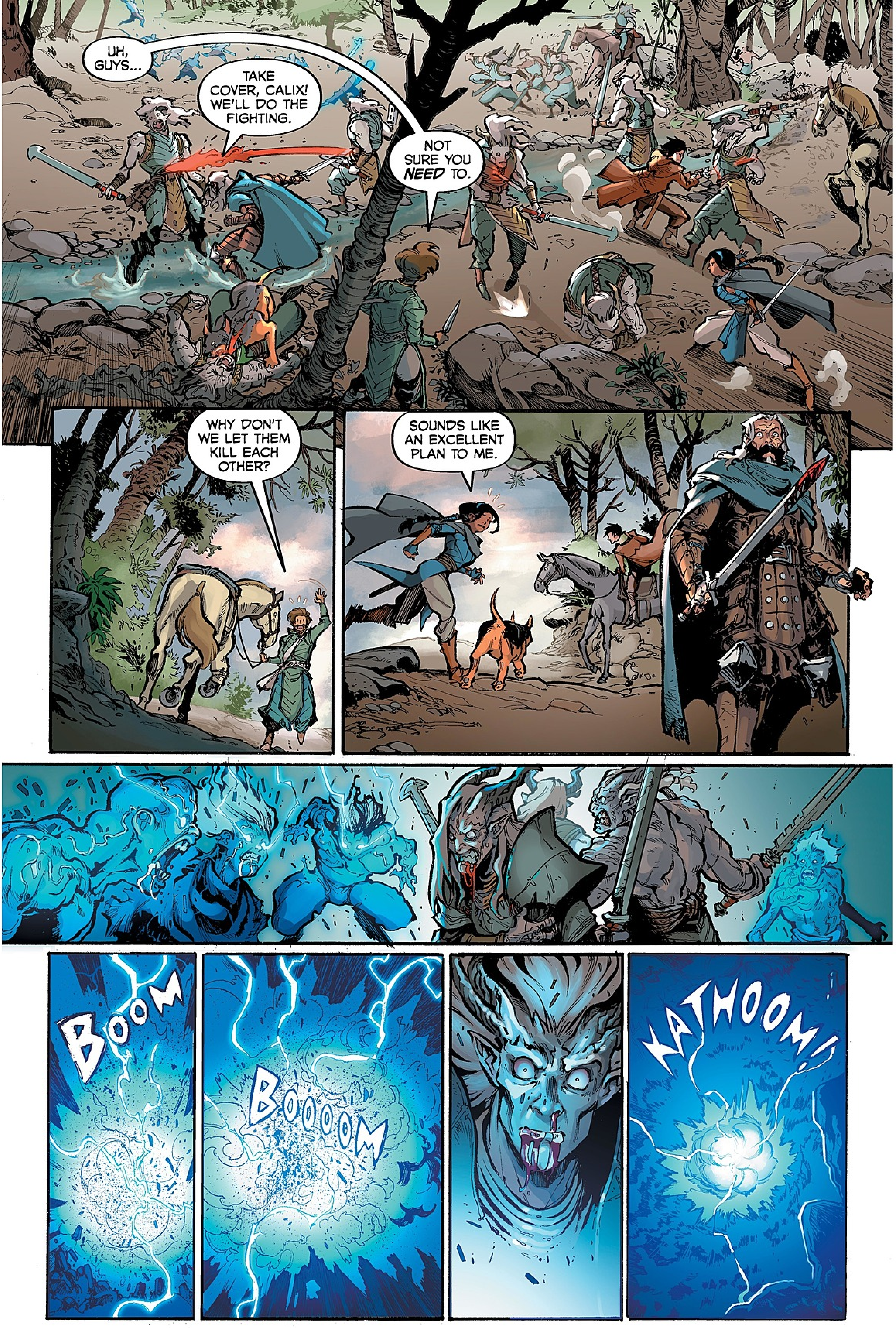

"GASPARD SAW NO USE FOR A HORSE THAT WOULD AVOID COMBAT, AND NAMED HIM CASSÉ, AS IF TO SAY HE WAS A BROKEN THING.
"BUT I WOULD NOT LET HIM PUT THE BEAST DOWN."
AND HE'S BEEN WITH ME EVER SINCE.
WE KEPT THE NAME AS A PRIVATE JOKE.
HOW PRIVATE CAN IT BE? YOU'VE TOLD US ALL.
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO CATCH THIS CARAVAN.
MY BOY, SACRIFICE IS A PART OF WAR.
BUT WE HAVE ALL LOST ENOUGH. IF WE CAN SAVE CASSÉ, WE WILL.
AND IF THE MAGE DOESN'T COME BACK OR CAN'T HEAL HIM? YOU'RE PUTTING HIM THROUGH THIS PAIN FOR NOTHING.
MARIUS? WHAT'S WRONG?
TAKE COVER.
SOMEONE ELSE IS AFTER THAT CARAVAN.
"MORE QUNARI."

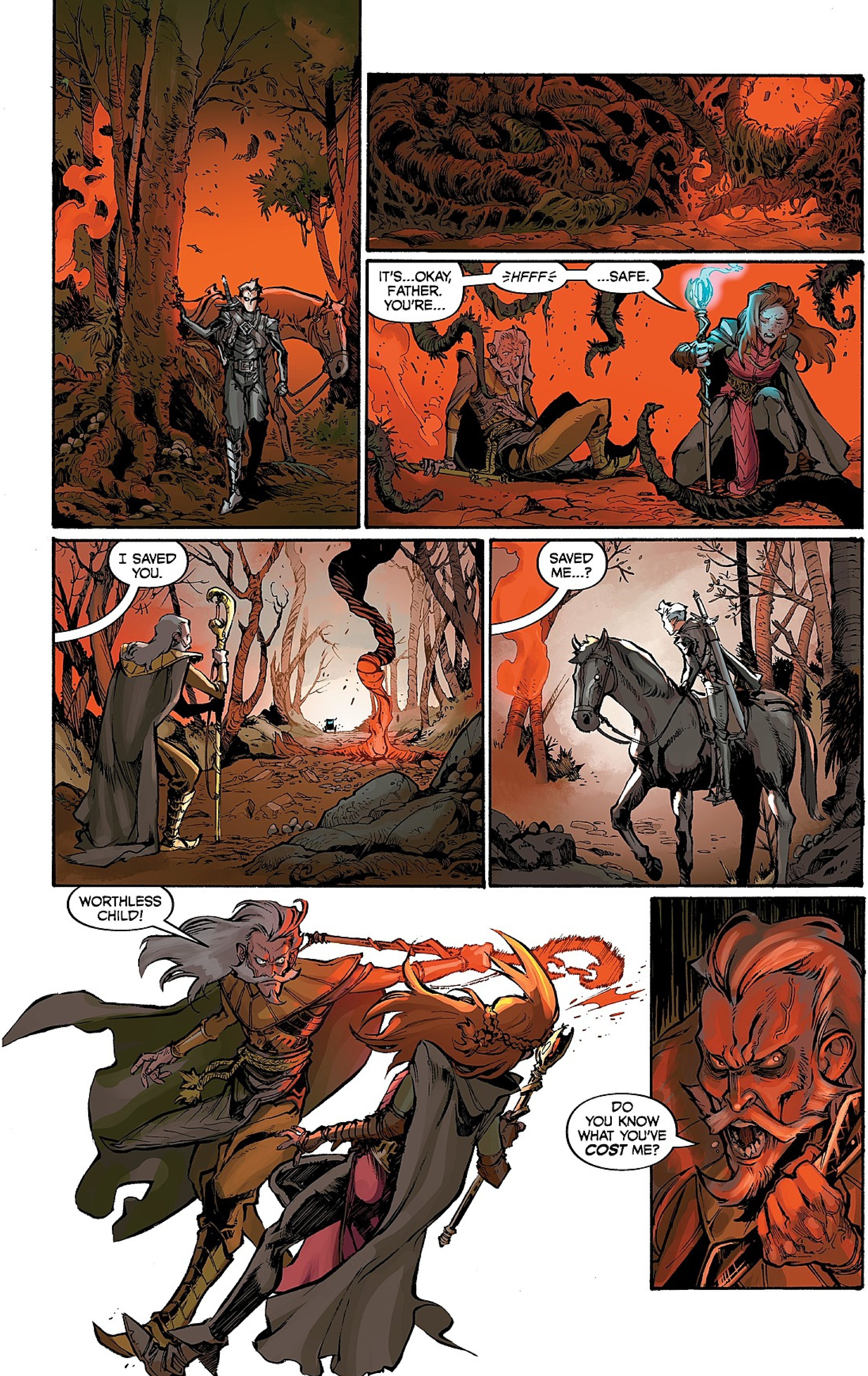

LOOKS LIKE OUR QUNARI PROBLEM AND OUR PURSUER PROBLEM MAY TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER, *NON?*
NO. WE SHOULD NOT COUNT ON THAT.
WE SOLVE BOTH PROBLEMS AT THE SAME TIME. PERMANENTLY.
FOR YOUR SACRIFICE, EACH OF YOUR FAMILIES WILL BE LIFTED TO SOPORATI STATUS--LAETAN, IF ANY POSSESS THE GIFT OF MAGIC.
BUT *THAT* IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.
THERE IS A TIME WHEN YOUR DUTY TO YOUR ***MASTER*** MUST OUTWEIGH ANY OTHER CONSIDERATION.
NOW IS SUCH A TIME.
AND YOUR SACRIFICE SHALL RESTORE THE VENATORI--AND HOUSES DANARIUS AND NENEALEUS--TO ALL THAT THEY ONCE WERE.

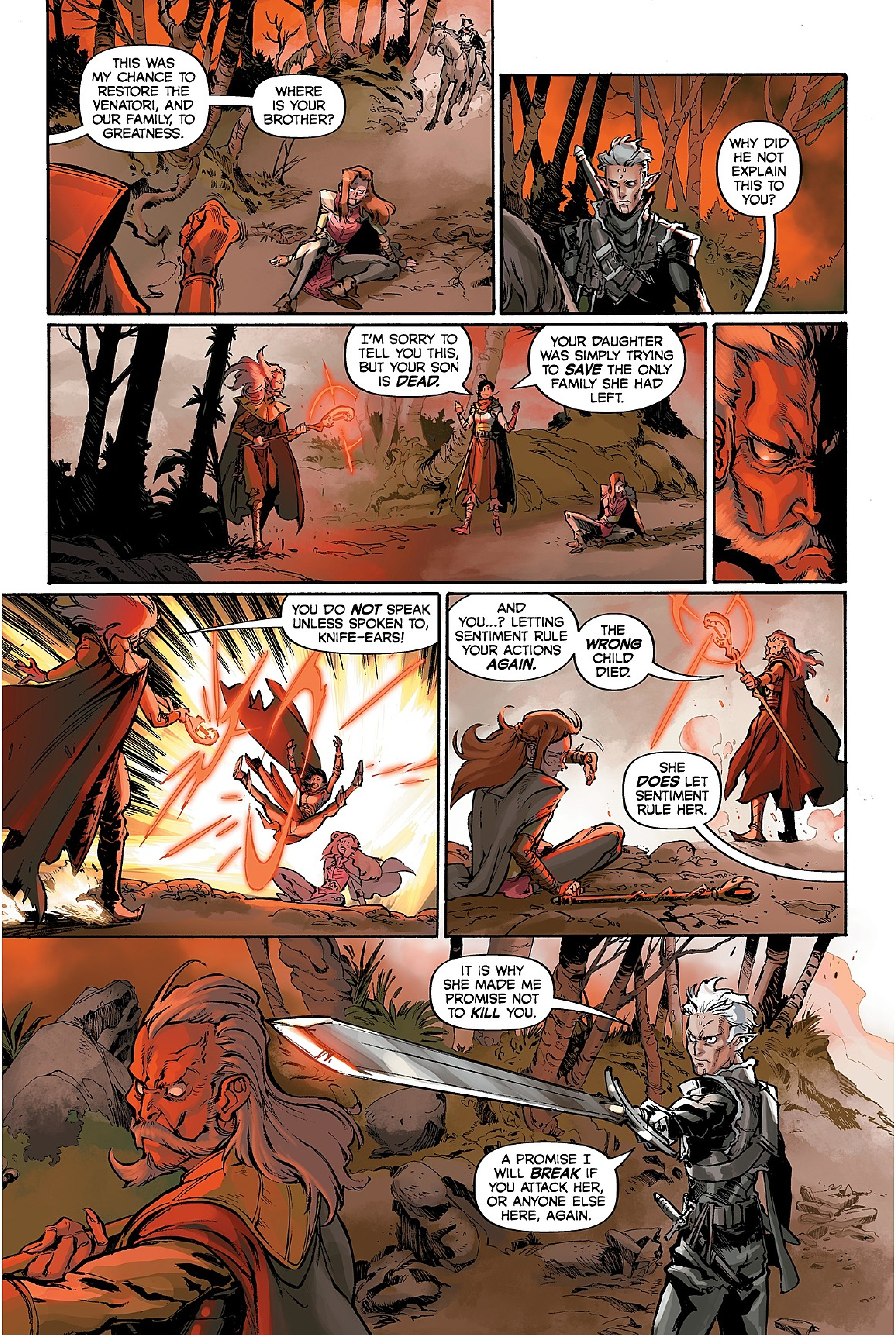

THE CARAVAN ISN'T FLEEING.
EXPECT MORE SERVANTS, RIGGED TO *EXPLODE.*
HEY, MARIUS! YOUR FORMER MASTER'S A BIT CRAZY.
I SUSPECT NO ONE KNOWS THAT BETTER THAN MARIUS, MY BOY.
MAKER'S WRATH...
AUTUMN! EXCELLENT TIMING.
HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE.
I HAVE TO GET MY FATHER BEFORE THE CARAVAN LEAVES.
VAEA, YOU MADE IT. AND YOU BROUGHT YOUNG MISS INVIDUS.

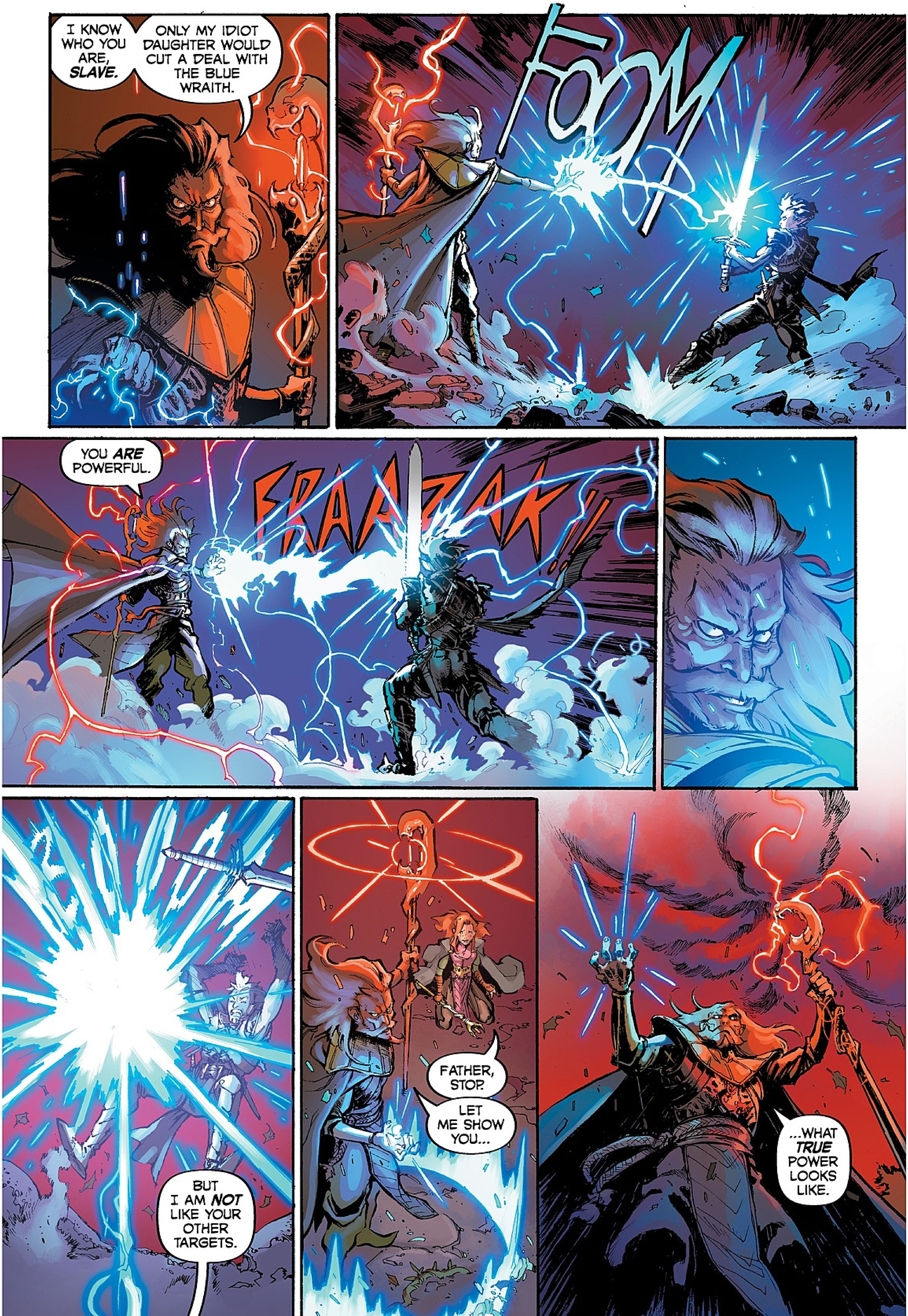

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE.
I THINK I DO.
WE NEED TO KEEP MOVING.
BEFORE THEY...
...WELL, AS YOU SEE.

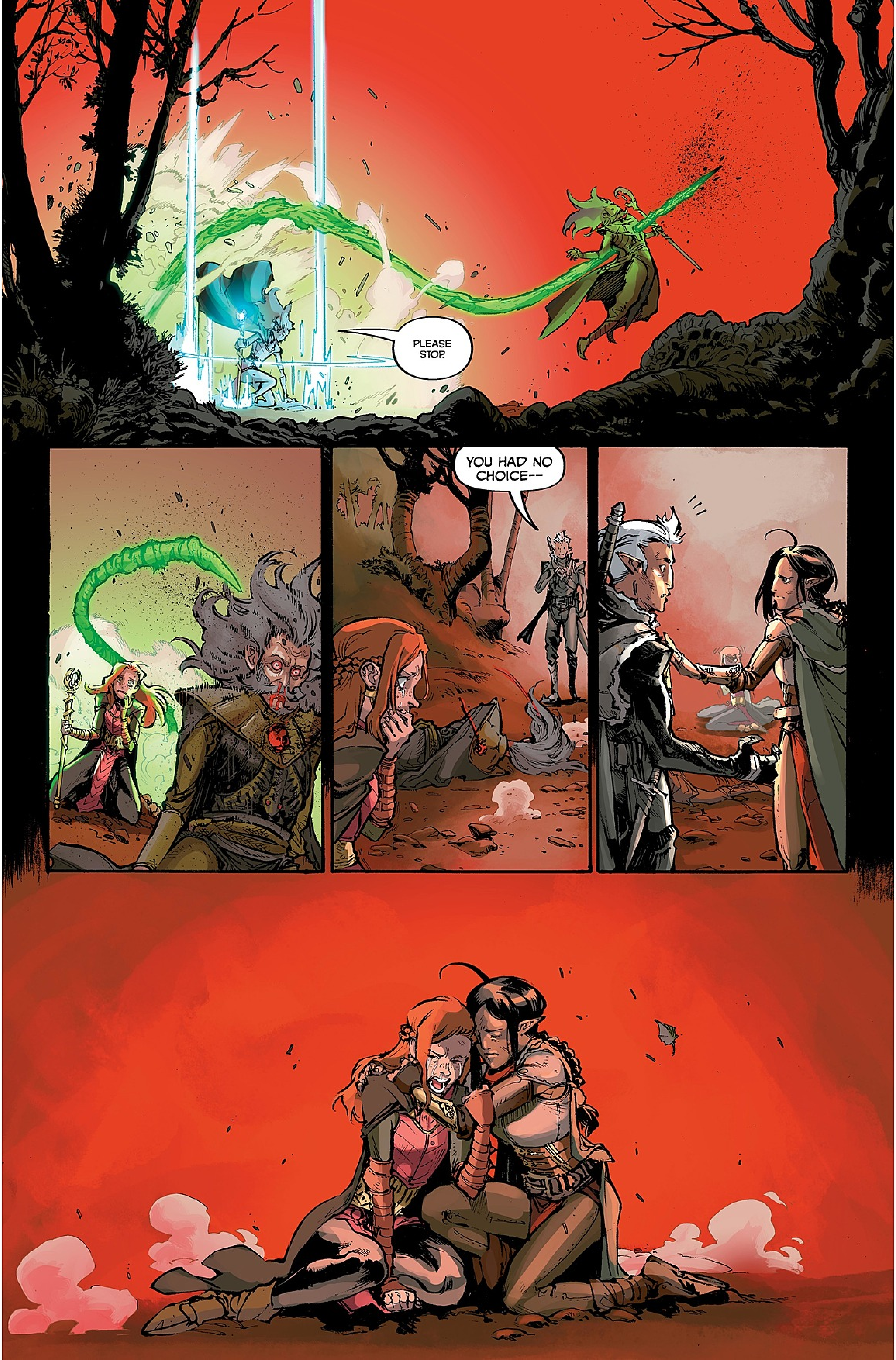

WE NEED TO *MOVE.* NOW.
HELLO, "BLUE WRAITH."
SHIRALLAS. WHAT HAVE YOU--
THAT POWER I SOUGHT? IT IS ALMOST MINE.
A POWER THAT THE HUMANS CAN'T HANDLE.
FOOM
KATHOOOOM

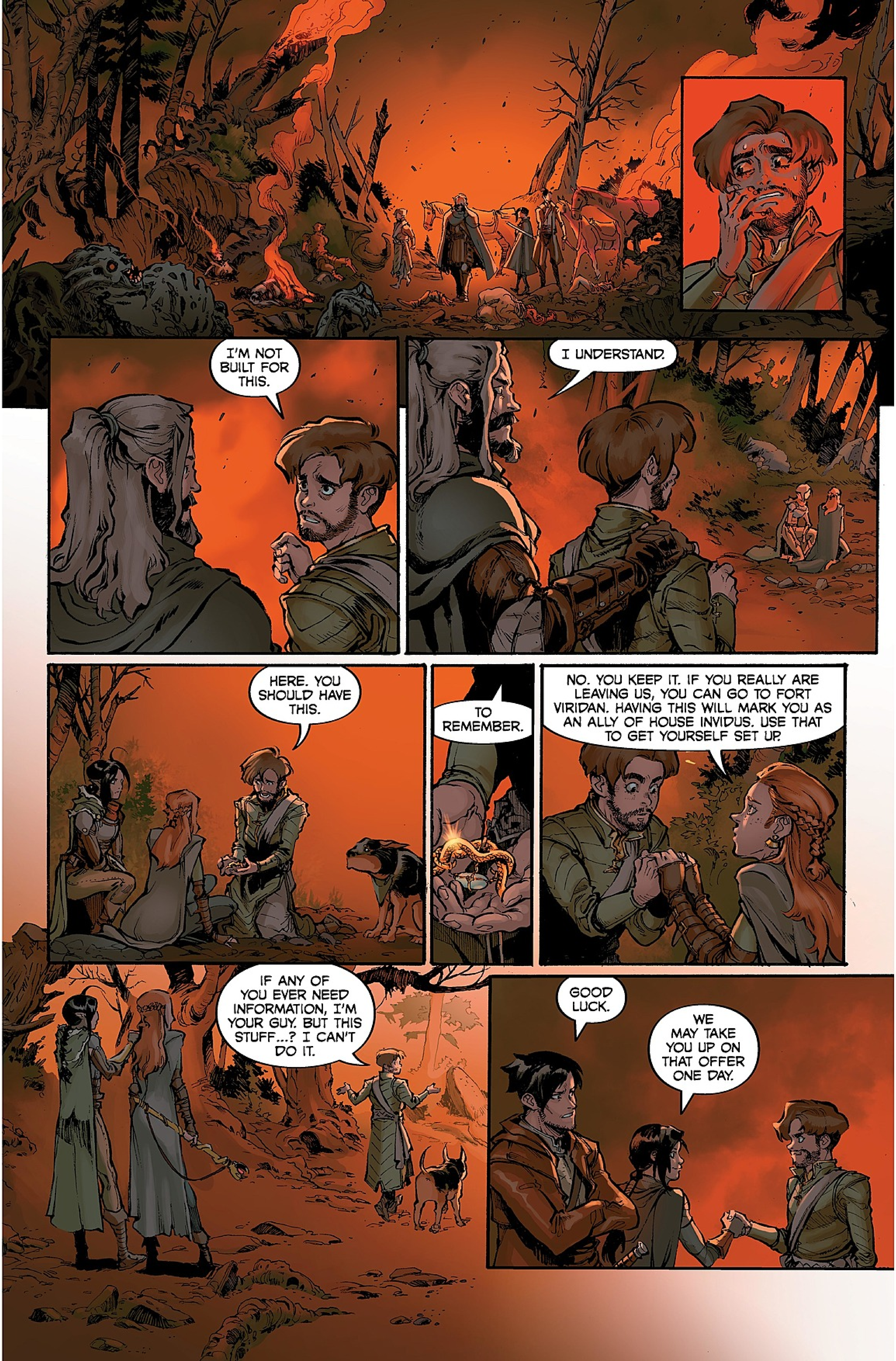

UH, GUYS...
TAKE COVER, CALIX! WE'LL DO THE FIGHTING.
NOT SURE YOU *NEED* TO.
WHY DON'T WE LET THEM KILL EACH OTHER?
SOUNDS LIKE AN EXCELLENT PLAN TO ME.
BOOM
BOOOOM
KATHOOM!

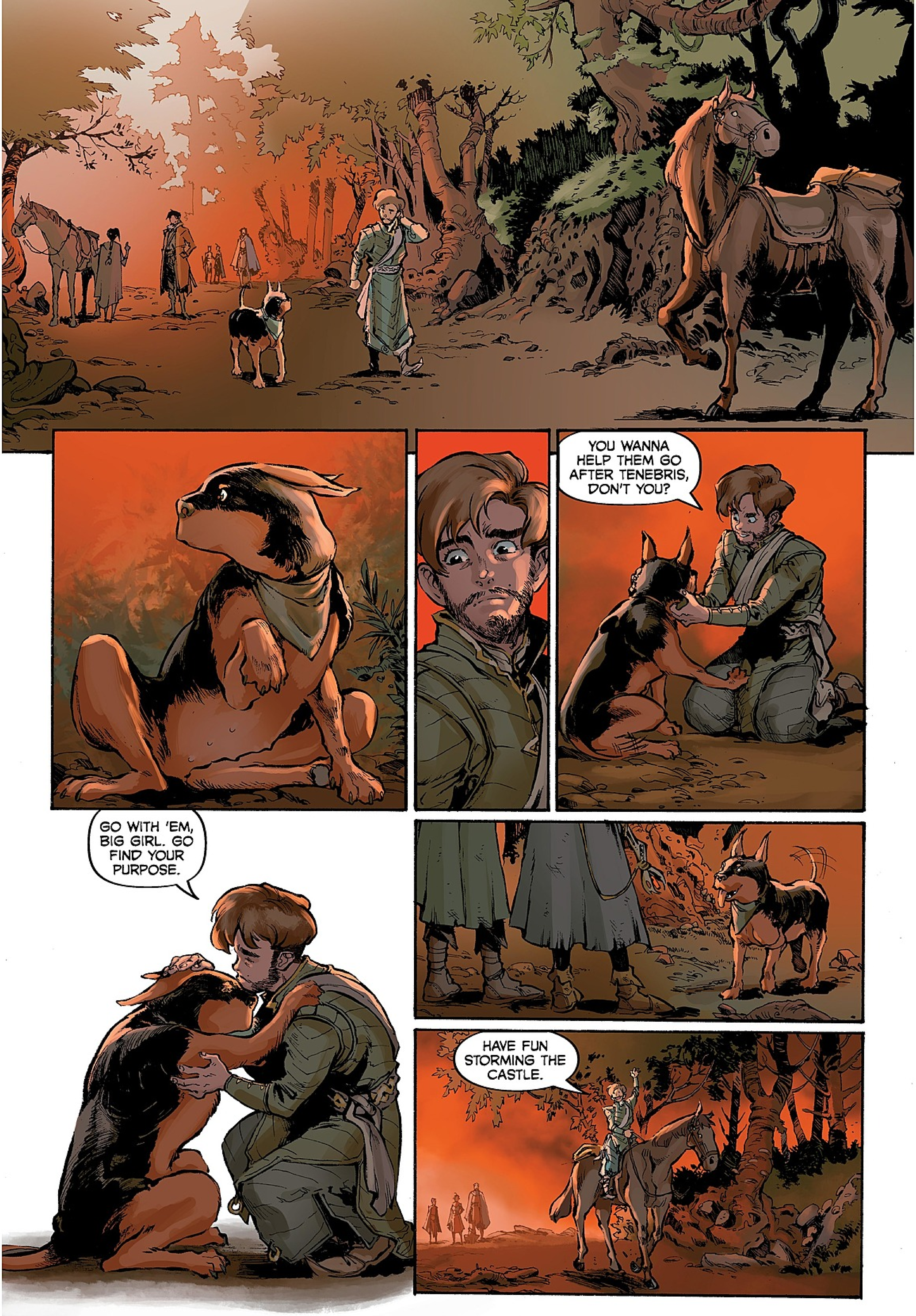

IT'S...OKAY, FATHER. YOU'RE...
HFFF
...SAFE.
I SAVED YOU.
SAVED ME...?
WORTHLESS CHILD!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE *COST* ME?

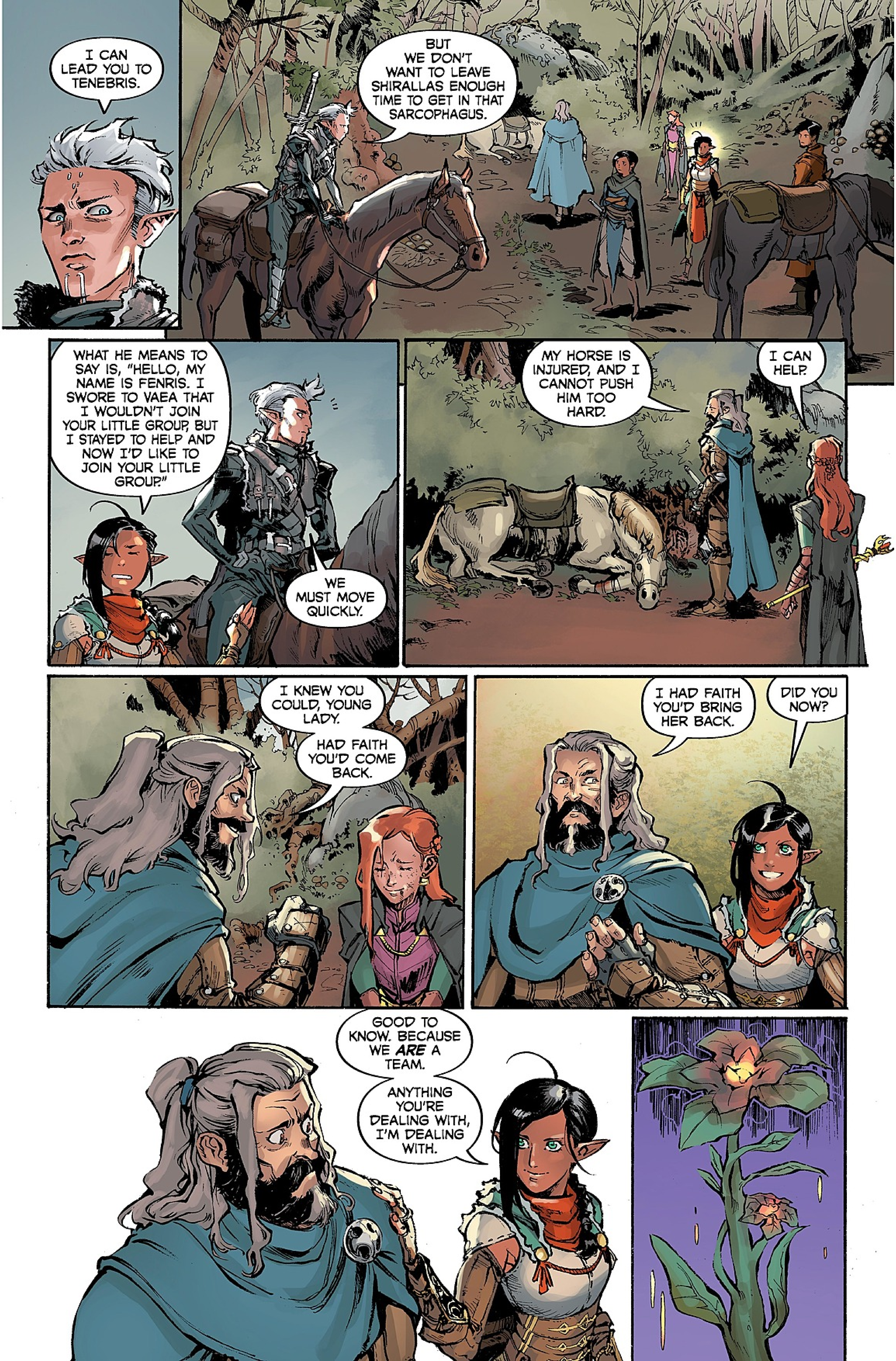

THIS WAS MY CHANCE TO RESTORE THE VENATORI, AND OUR FAMILY, TO GREATNESS.
WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER?
WHY DID HE NOT EXPLAIN THIS TO YOU?
I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOUR SON IS DEAD.
YOUR DAUGHTER WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO SAVE THE ONLY FAMILY SHE HAD LEFT.
YOU DO NOT SPEAK UNLESS SPOKEN TO, KNIFE-EARS!
AND YOU...? LETTING SENTIMENT RULE YOUR ACTIONS AGAIN.
THE WRONG CHILD DIED.
SHE DOES LET SENTIMENT RULE HER.
IT IS WHY SHE MADE ME PROMISE NOT TO KILL YOU.
A PROMISE I WILL BREAK IF YOU ATTACK HER, OR ANYONE ELSE HERE, AGAIN.


I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, *SLAVE.*
ONLY MY IDIOT DAUGHTER WOULD CUT A DEAL WITH THE BLUE WRAITH.
FOOM
YOU *ARE* POWERFUL.
FRAAZAK!!
BUT I AM *NOT* LIKE YOUR OTHER TARGETS.
FATHER, STOP.
LET ME SHOW YOU...
...WHAT *TRUE* POWER LOOKS LIKE.


PLEASE STOP.
YOU HAD NO CHOICE--


I'M NOT BUILT FOR THIS.
I UNDERSTAND.
HERE. YOU SHOULD HAVE THIS.
TO REMEMBER.
NO. YOU KEEP IT. IF YOU REALLY ARE LEAVING US, YOU CAN GO TO FORT VIRIDAN. HAVING THIS WILL MARK YOU AS AN ALLY OF HOUSE INVIDUS. USE THAT TO GET YOURSELF SET UP.
IF ANY OF YOU EVER NEED INFORMATION, I'M YOUR GUY. BUT THIS STUFF...? I CAN'T DO IT.
GOOD LUCK.
WE MAY TAKE YOU UP ON THAT OFFER ONE DAY.


YOU WANNA HELP THEM GO AFTER TENEBRIS, DON'T YOU?
GO WITH 'EM, BIG GIRL. GO FIND YOUR PURPOSE.
HAVE FUN STORMING THE CASTLE.


I CAN LEAD YOU TO TENEBRIS.
BUT WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE SHIRALLAS ENOUGH TIME TO GET IN THAT SARCOPHAGUS.
WHAT HE MEANS TO SAY IS, "HELLO, MY NAME IS FENRIS. I SWORE TO VAEA THAT I WOULDN'T JOIN YOUR LITTLE GROUP, BUT I STAYED TO HELP AND NOW I'D LIKE TO JOIN YOUR LITTLE GROUP."
WE MUST MOVE QUICKLY.
MY HORSE IS INJURED, AND I CANNOT PUSH HIM TOO HARD.
I CAN HELP.
I KNEW YOU COULD, YOUNG LADY.
HAD FAITH YOU'D COME BACK.
I HAD FAITH YOU'D BRING HER BACK.
DID YOU NOW?
GOOD TO KNOW. BECAUSE WE *ARE* A TEAM.
ANYTHING YOU'RE DEALING WITH, I'M DEALING WITH.

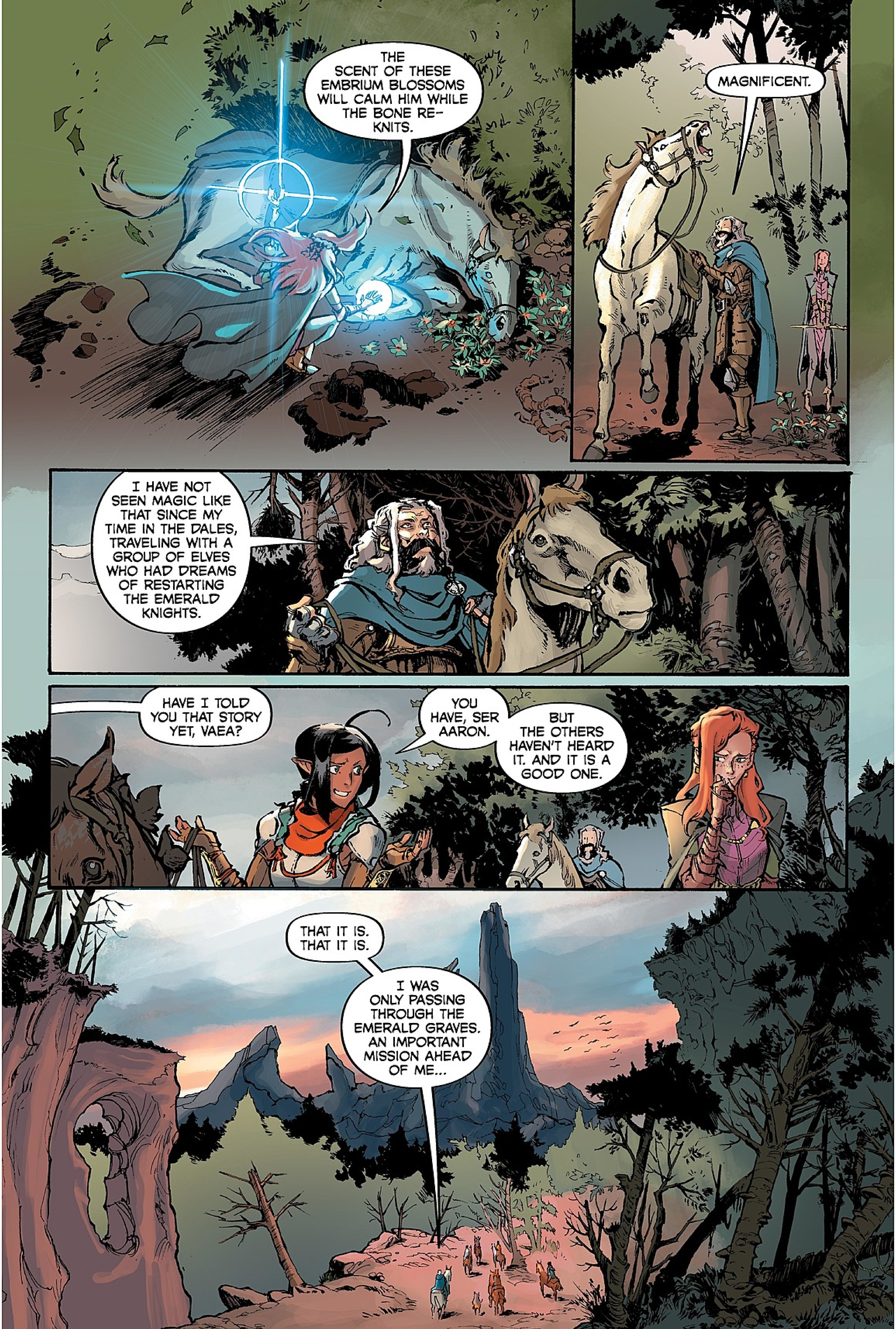
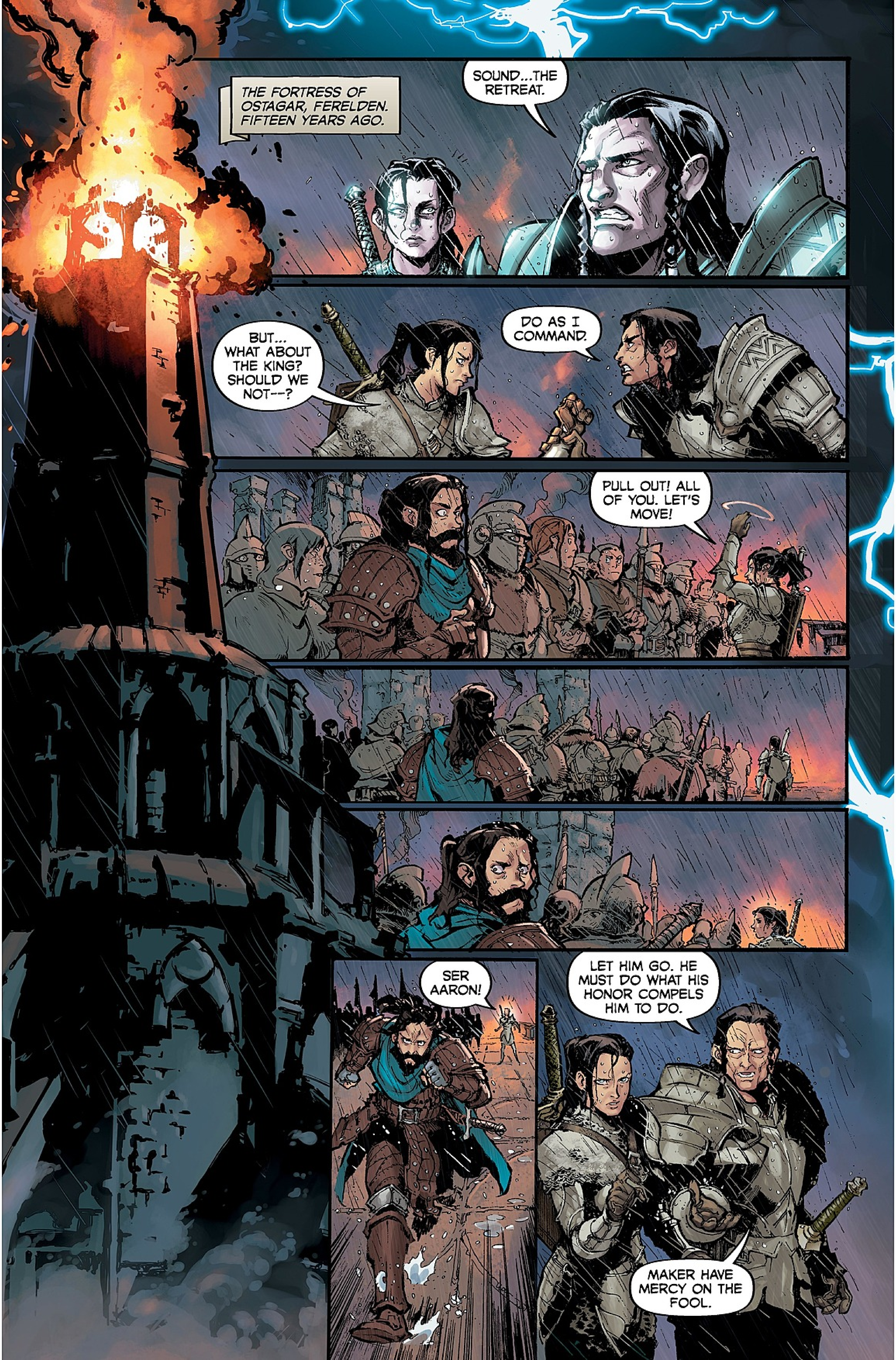
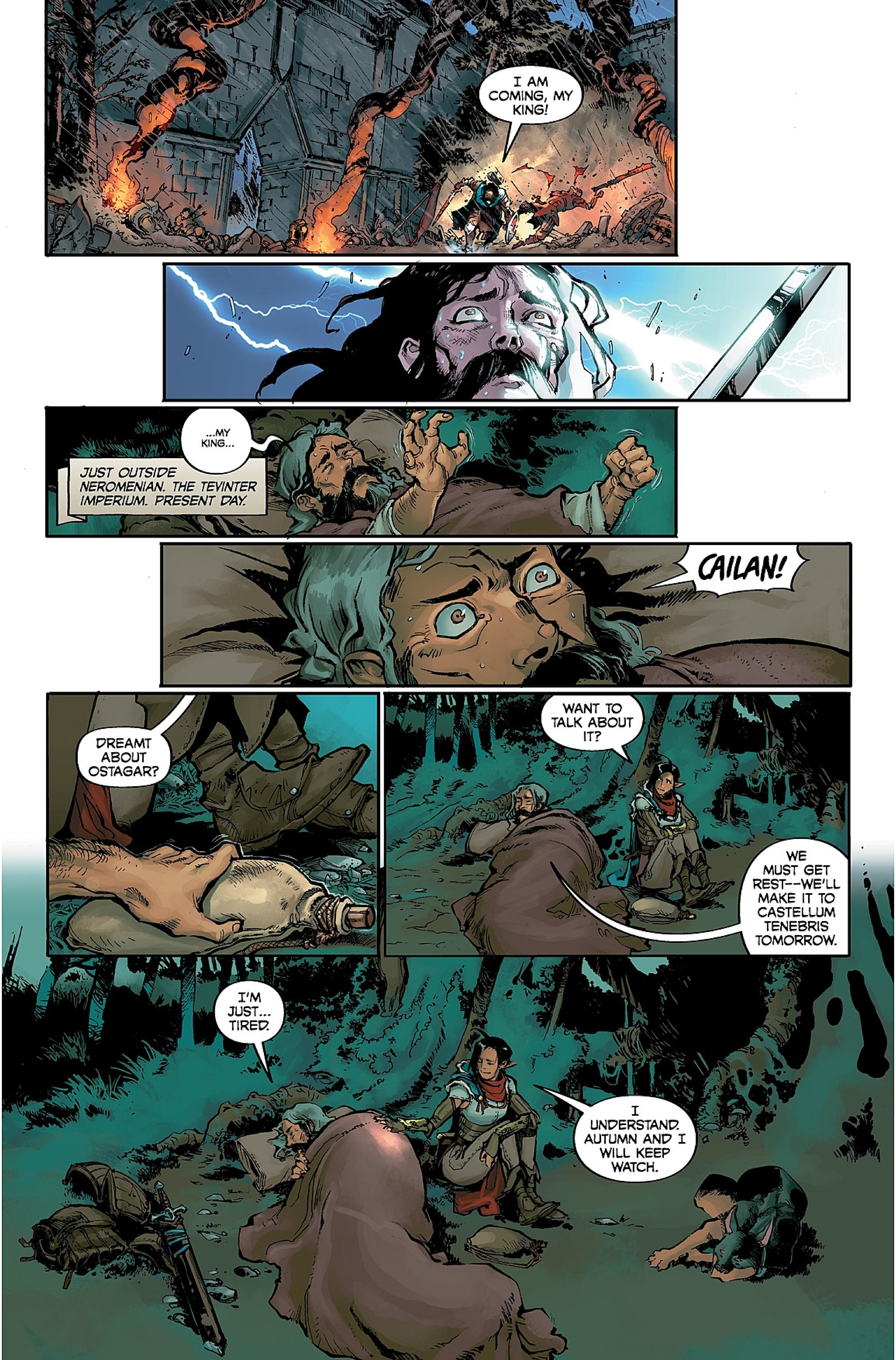
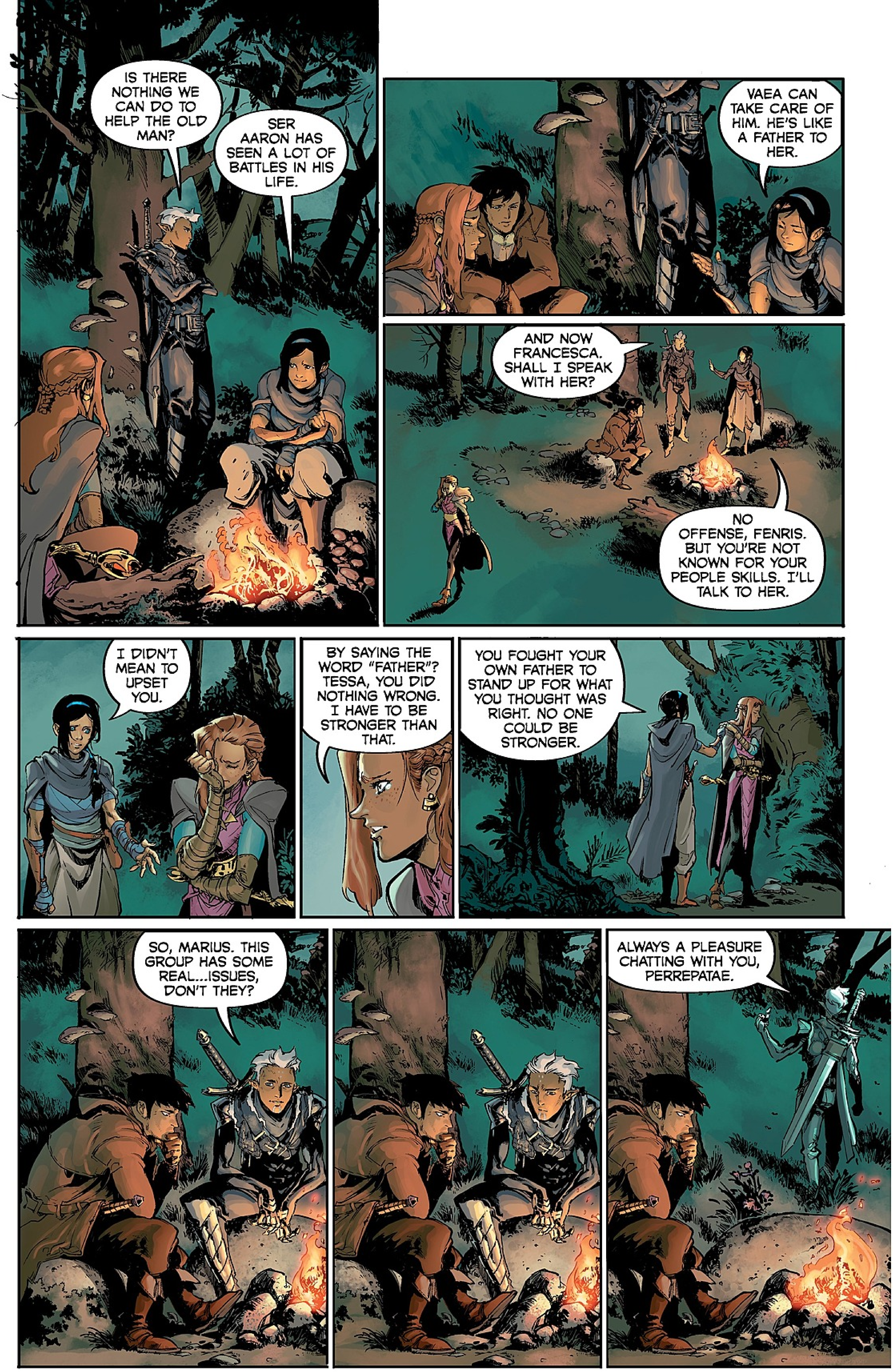

THE SCENT OF THESE EMBRIUM BLOSSOMS WILL CALM HIM WHILE THE BONE RE-KNITS.
MAGNIFICENT.
I HAVE NOT SEEN MAGIC LIKE THAT SINCE MY TIME IN THE DALES, TRAVELING WITH A GROUP OF ELVES WHO HAD DREAMS OF RESTARTING THE EMERALD KNIGHTS.
HAVE I TOLD YOU THAT STORY YET, VAEA?
YOU HAVE, SER AARON.
BUT THE OTHERS HAVEN'T HEARD IT. AND IT IS A GOOD ONE.
THAT IT IS. THAT IT IS.
I WAS ONLY PASSING THROUGH THE EMERALD GRAVES. AN IMPORTANT MISSION AHEAD OF ME...

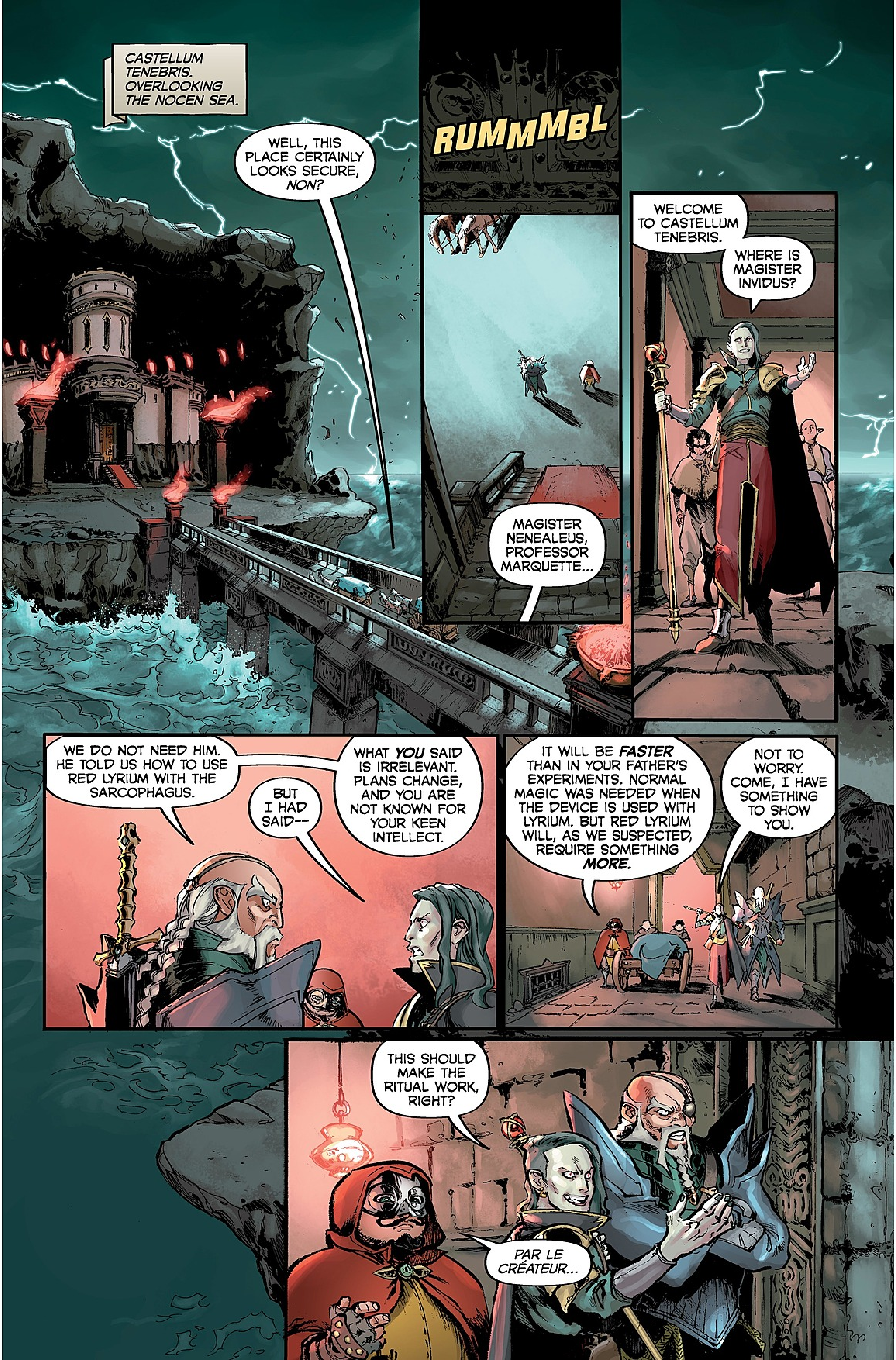
Illustration by Sachin Teng

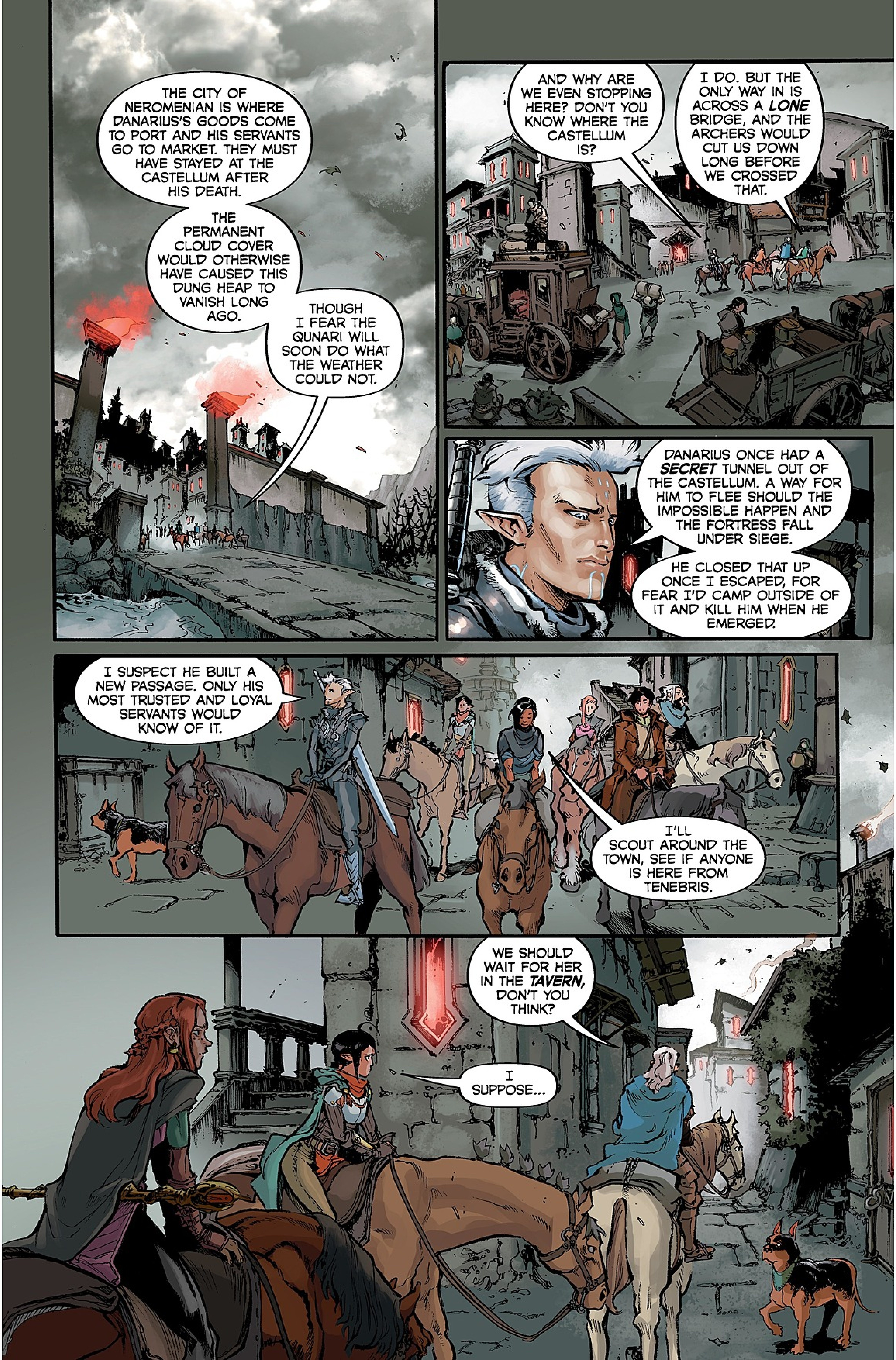
DARK FORTRESS

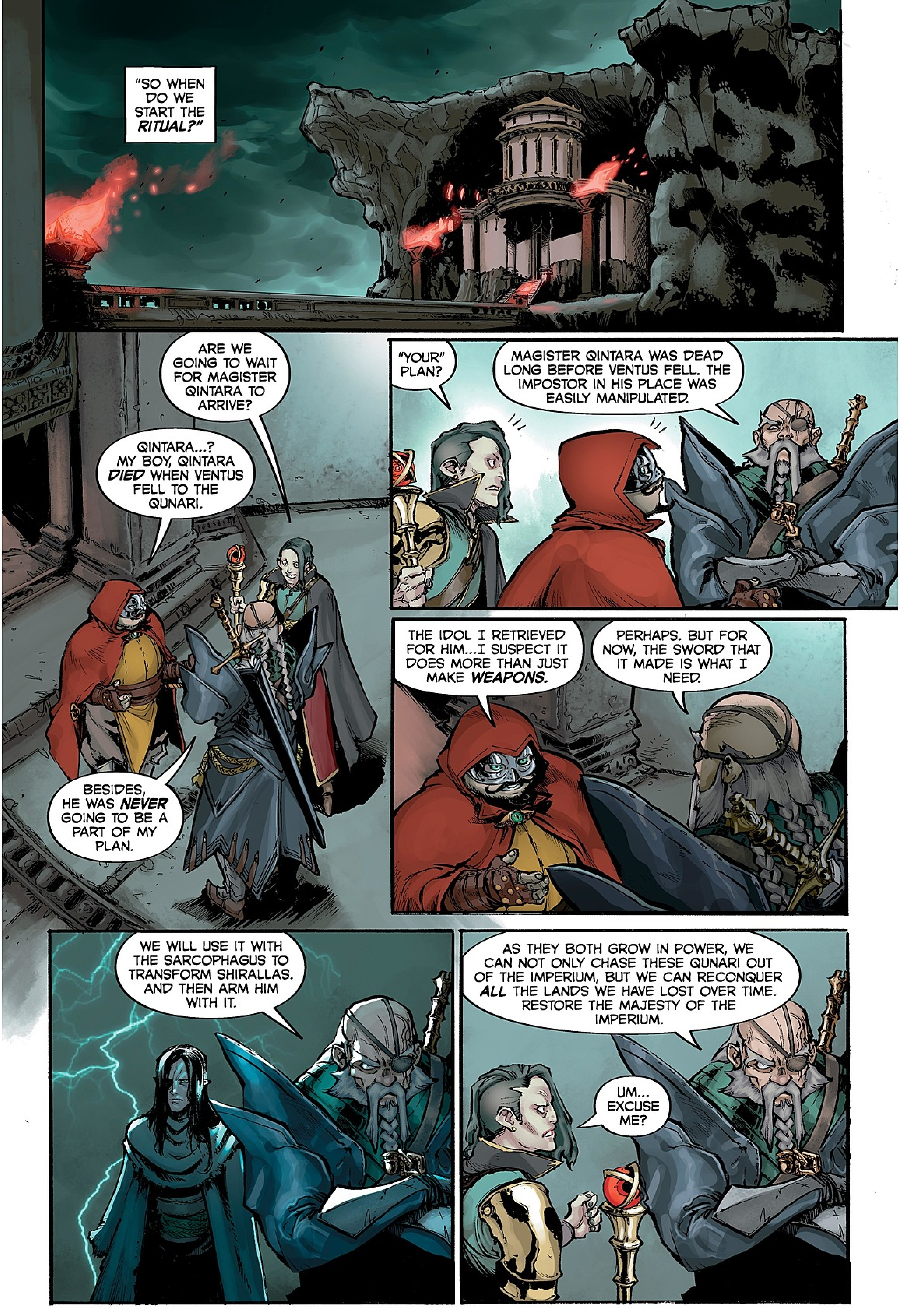

THE FORTRESS OF OSTAGAR, FERELDEN. FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.
SOUND...THE RETREAT.
BUT... WHAT ABOUT THE KING? SHOULD WE NOT--?
DO AS I COMMAND.
PULL OUT! ALL OF YOU. LET'S MOVE!
SER AARON!
LET HIM GO. HE MUST DO WHAT HIS HONOR COMPELS HIM TO DO.
MAKER HAVE MERCY ON THE FOOL.

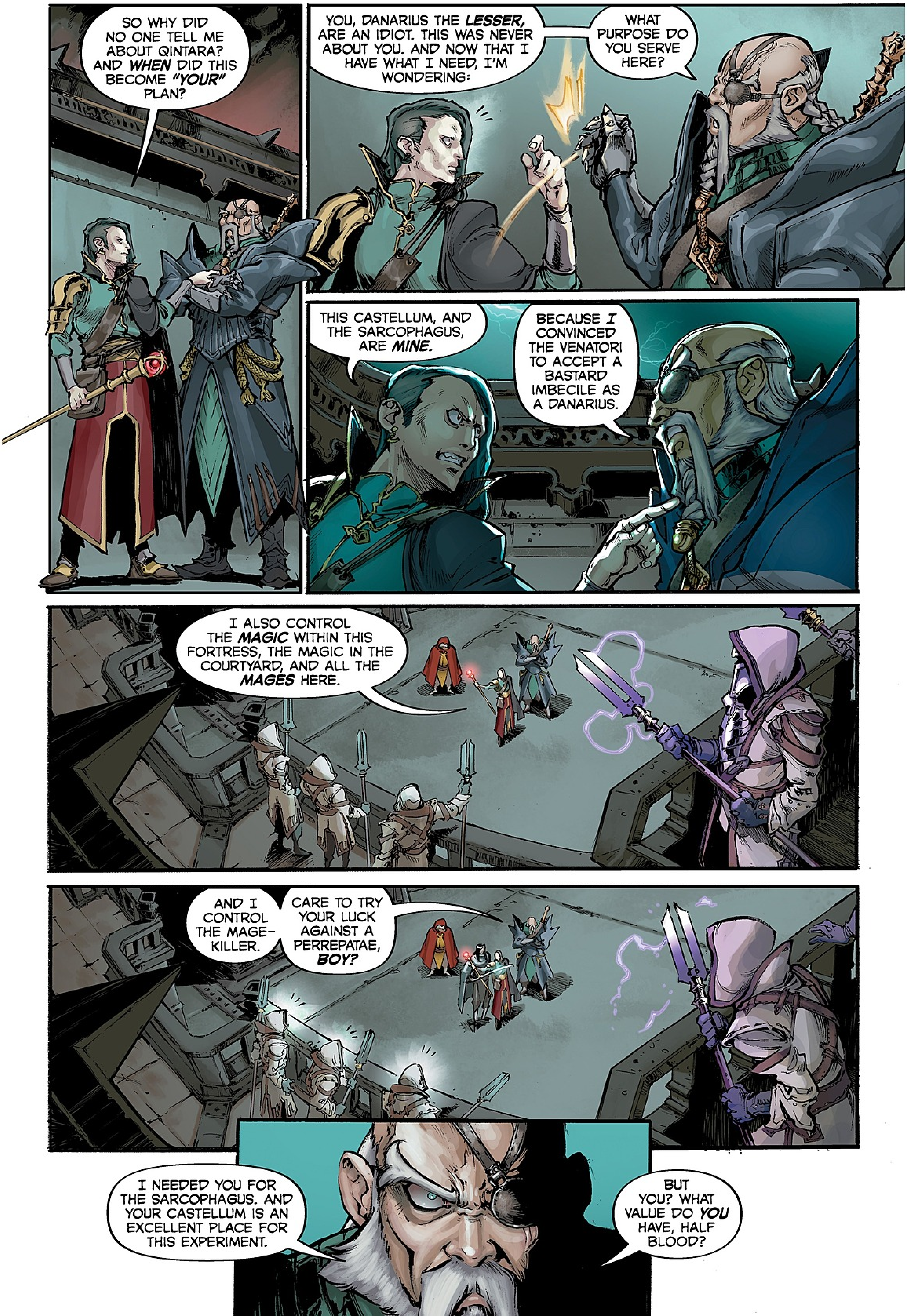

I AM COMING, MY KING!
...MY KING...
JUST OUTSIDE NEROMENIAN. THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM. PRESENT DAY.
CAILAN!
DREAMT ABOUT OSTAGAR?
WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?
WE MUST GET REST--WE'LL MAKE IT TO CASTELLUM TENEBRIS TOMORROW.
I'M JUST... TIRED.
I UNDERSTAND. AUTUMN AND I WILL KEEP WATCH.

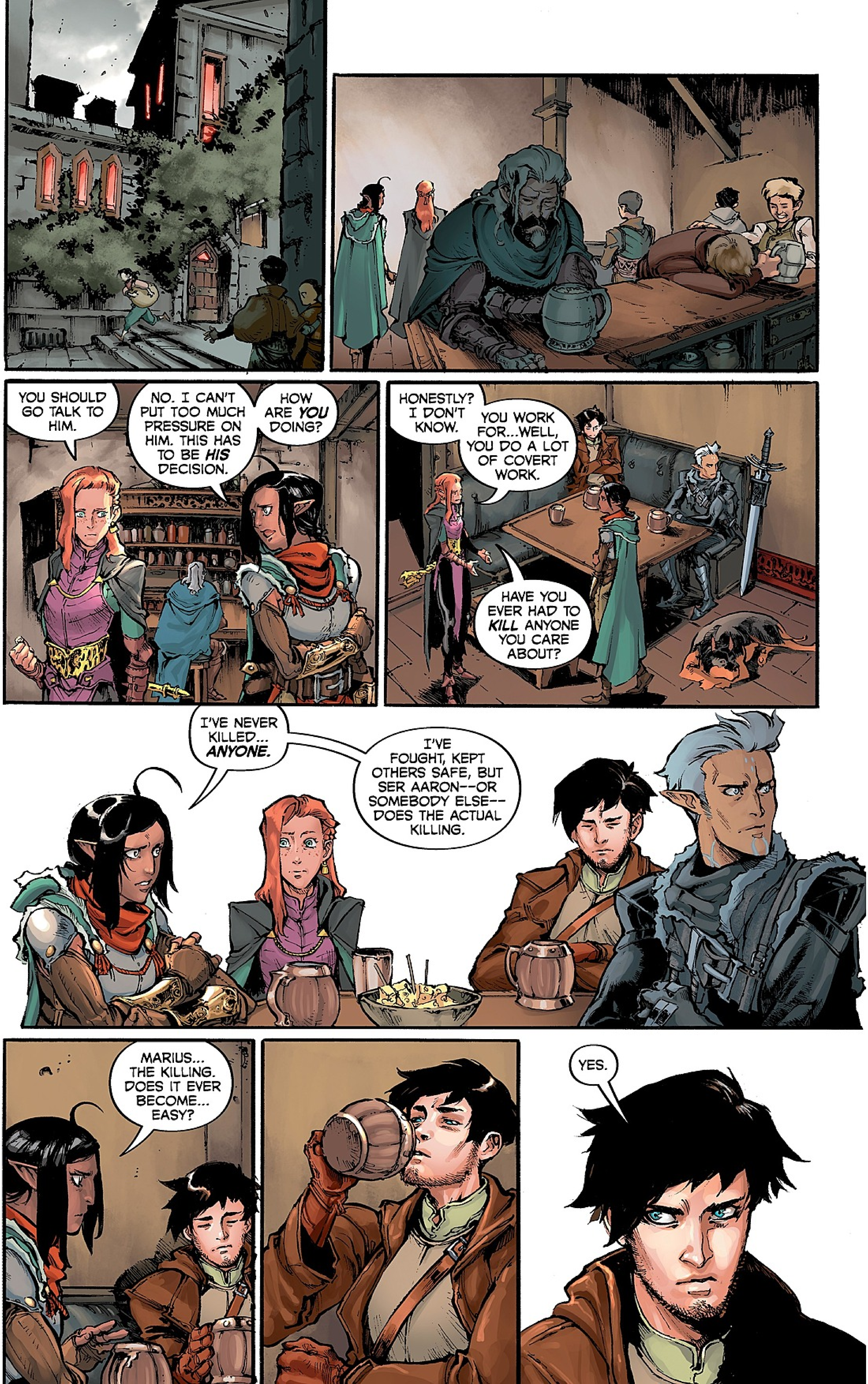

IS THERE NOTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP THE OLD MAN?
SER AARON HAS SEEN A LOT OF BATTLES IN HIS LIFE.
VAEA CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM. HE'S LIKE A FATHER TO HER.
AND NOW FRANCESCA. SHALL I SPEAK WITH HER?
NO OFFENSE, FENRIS. BUT YOU'RE NOT KNOWN FOR YOUR PEOPLE SKILLS. I'LL TALK TO HER.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU.
BY SAYING THE WORD "FATHER"? TESSA, YOU DID NOTHING WRONG. I HAVE TO BE STRONGER THAN THAT.
YOU FOUGHT YOUR OWN FATHER TO STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS RIGHT. NO ONE COULD BE STRONGER.
SO, MARIUS. THIS GROUP HAS SOME REAL...ISSUES, DON'T THEY?
ALWAYS A PLEASURE CHATTING WITH YOU, PERREPATAE.

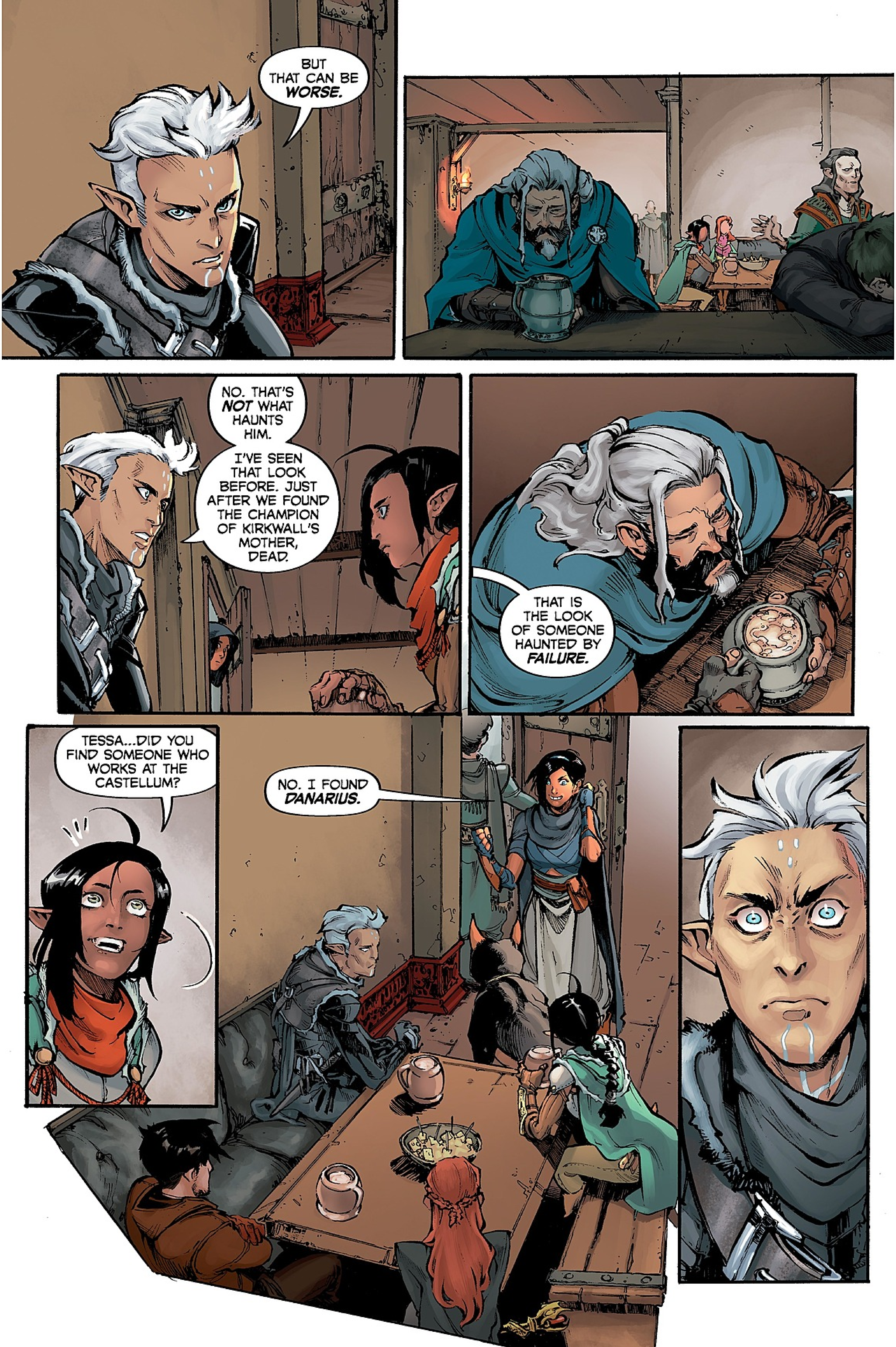

CASTELLUM TENEBRIS. OVERLOOKING THE NOCEN SEA.
WELL, THIS PLACE CERTAINLY LOOKS SECURE, *NON?*
RUMMMBL
MAGISTER NENEALEUS, PROFESSOR MARQUETTE...
WELCOME TO CASTELLUM TENEBRIS.
WHERE IS MAGISTER INVIDUS?
WE DO NOT NEED HIM. HE TOLD US HOW TO USE RED LYRIUM WITH THE SARCOPHAGUS.
BUT I HAD SAID--
WHAT ***YOU*** SAID IS IRRELEVANT. PLANS CHANGE, AND YOU ARE NOT KNOWN FOR YOUR KEEN INTELLECT.
IT WILL BE ***FASTER*** THAN IN YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIMENTS. NORMAL MAGIC WAS NEEDED WHEN THE DEVICE IS USED WITH LYRIUM. BUT RED LYRIUM WILL, AS WE SUSPECTED, REQUIRE SOMETHING ***MORE.***
NOT TO WORRY. COME, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.
THIS SHOULD MAKE THE RITUAL WORK, RIGHT?
PAR LE CRÉATEUR...

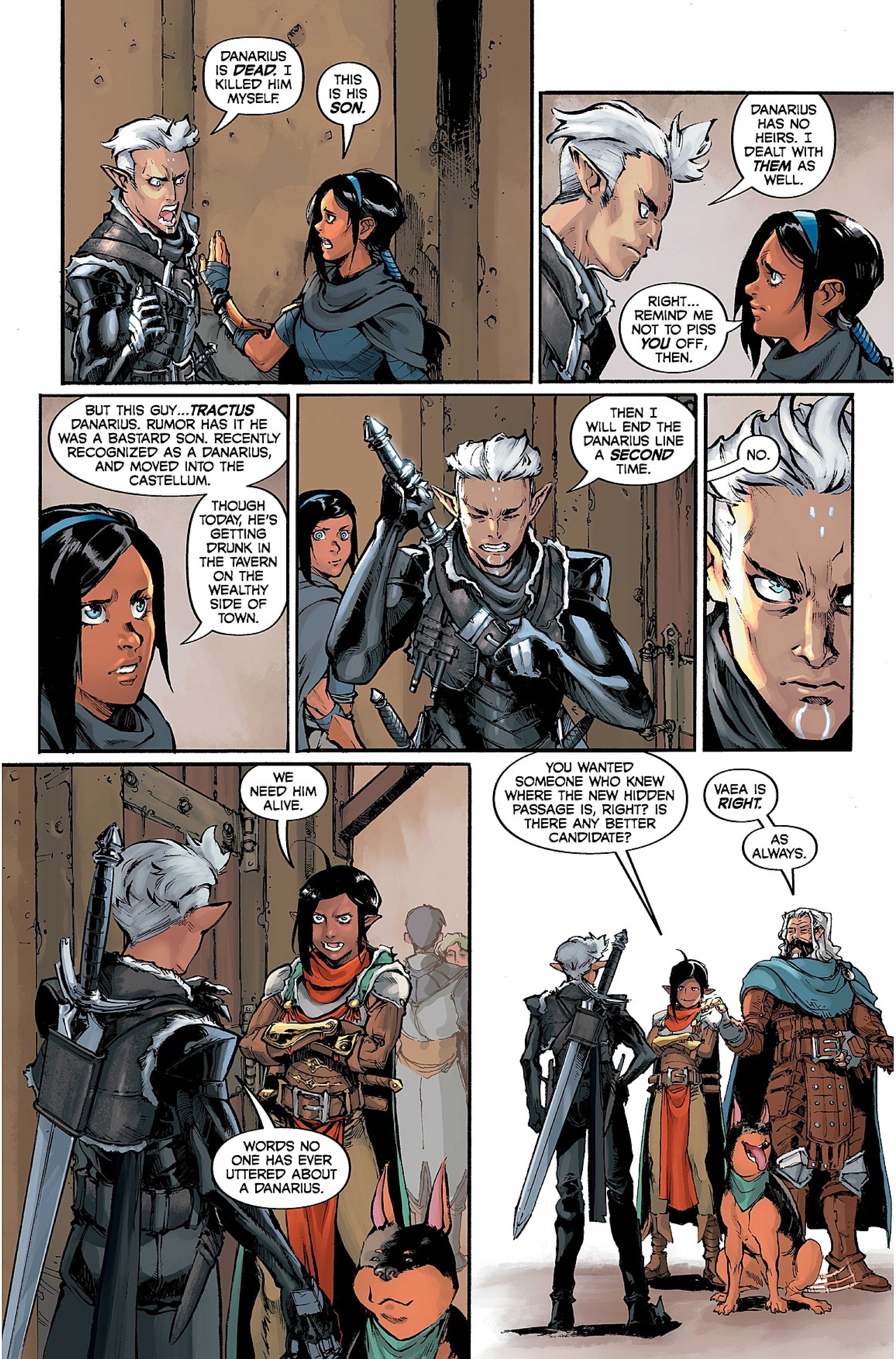

THE CITY OF NEROMENIAN IS WHERE DANARIUS'S GOODS COME TO PORT AND HIS SERVANTS GO TO MARKET. THEY MUST HAVE STAYED AT THE CASTELLUM AFTER HIS DEATH.
THE PERMANENT CLOUD COVER WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE CAUSED THIS DUNG HEAP TO VANISH LONG AGO.
THOUGH I FEAR THE QUNARI WILL SOON DO WHAT THE WEATHER COULD NOT.
AND WHY ARE WE EVEN STOPPING HERE? DON'T YOU KNOW WHERE THE CASTELLUM IS?
I DO. BUT THE ONLY WAY IN IS ACROSS A *LONE* BRIDGE, AND THE ARCHERS WOULD CUT US DOWN LONG BEFORE WE CROSSED THAT.
DANARIUS ONCE HAD A *SECRET* TUNNEL OUT OF THE CASTELLUM. A WAY FOR HIM TO FLEE SHOULD THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPEN AND THE FORTRESS FALL UNDER SIEGE.
HE CLOSED THAT UP ONCE I ESCAPED, FOR FEAR I'D CAMP OUTSIDE OF IT AND KILL HIM WHEN HE EMERGED.
I SUSPECT HE BUILT A NEW PASSAGE. ONLY HIS MOST TRUSTED AND LOYAL SERVANTS WOULD KNOW OF IT.
I'LL SCOUT AROUND THE TOWN, SEE IF ANYONE IS HERE FROM TENEBRIS.
WE SHOULD WAIT FOR HER IN THE *TAVERN,* DON'T YOU THINK?
I SUPPOSE...

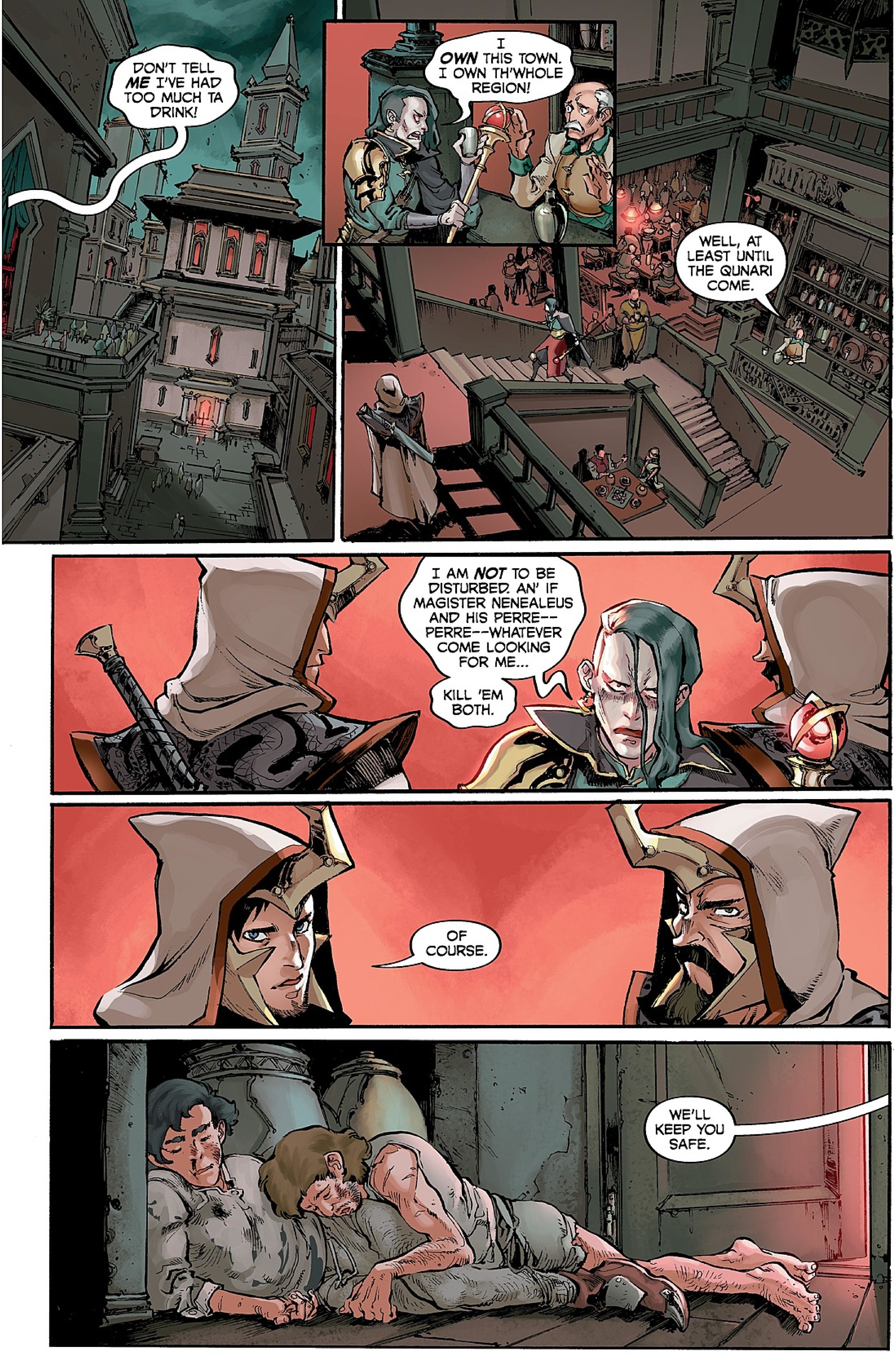

"SO WHEN DO WE START THE *RITUAL?"*
ARE WE GOING TO WAIT FOR MAGISTER QINTARA TO ARRIVE?
QINTARA...? MY BOY, QINTARA *DIED* WHEN VENTUS FELL TO THE QUNARI.
BESIDES, HE WAS *NEVER* GOING TO BE A PART OF MY PLAN.
"YOUR" PLAN?
MAGISTER QINTARA WAS DEAD LONG BEFORE VENTUS FELL. THE IMPOSTOR IN HIS PLACE WAS EASILY MANIPULATED.
THE IDOL I RETRIEVED FOR HIM...I SUSPECT IT DOES MORE THAN JUST MAKE *WEAPONS.*
PERHAPS. BUT FOR NOW, THE SWORD THAT IT MADE IS WHAT I NEED.
WE WILL USE IT WITH THE SARCOPHAGUS TO TRANSFORM SHIRALLAS. AND THEN ARM HIM WITH IT.
AS THEY BOTH GROW IN POWER, WE CAN NOT ONLY CHASE THESE QUNARI OUT OF THE IMPERIUM, BUT WE CAN RECONQUER *ALL* THE LANDS WE HAVE LOST OVER TIME. RESTORE THE MAJESTY OF THE IMPERIUM.
UM... EXCUSE ME?

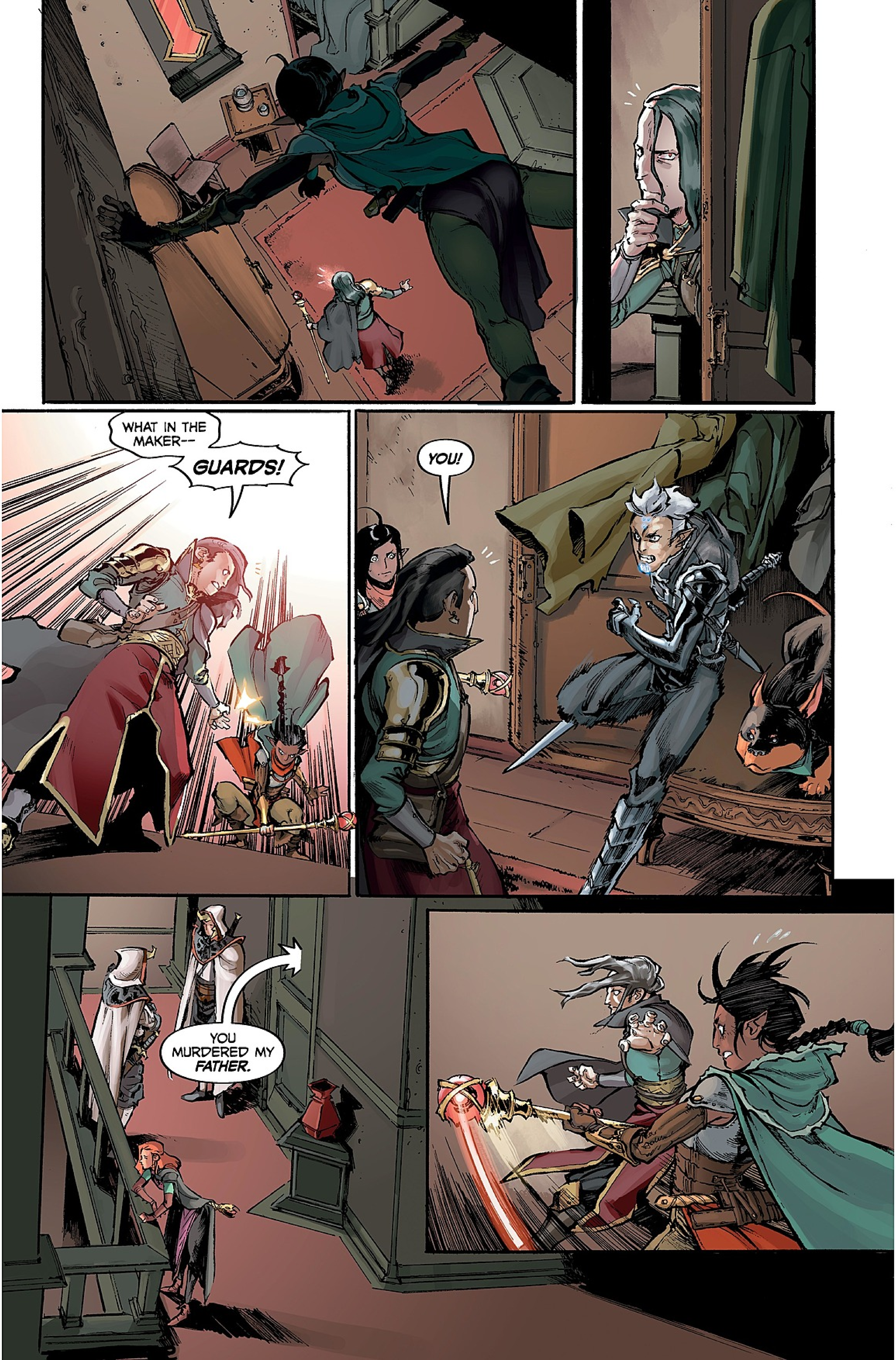

SO WHY DID NO ONE TELL ME ABOUT QINTARA? AND *WHEN* DID THIS BECOME *"YOUR"* PLAN?
YOU, DANARIUS THE *LESSER,* ARE AN IDIOT. THIS WAS NEVER ABOUT YOU. AND NOW THAT I HAVE WHAT I NEED, I'M WONDERING:
WHAT PURPOSE DO YOU SERVE HERE?
THIS CASTELLUM, AND THE SARCOPHAGUS, ARE *MINE.*
BECAUSE *I* CONVINCED THE VENATORI TO ACCEPT A BASTARD IMBECILE AS A DANARIUS.
I ALSO CONTROL THE *MAGIC* WITHIN THIS FORTRESS, THE MAGIC IN THE COURTYARD, AND ALL THE *MAGES* HERE.
AND I CONTROL THE MAGE-KILLER.
CARE TO TRY YOUR LUCK AGAINST A PERREPATAE, *BOY?*
I NEEDED YOU FOR THE SARCOPHAGUS. AND YOUR CASTELLUM IS AN EXCELLENT PLACE FOR THIS EXPERIMENT.
BUT YOU? WHAT VALUE DO *YOU* HAVE, HALF BLOOD?

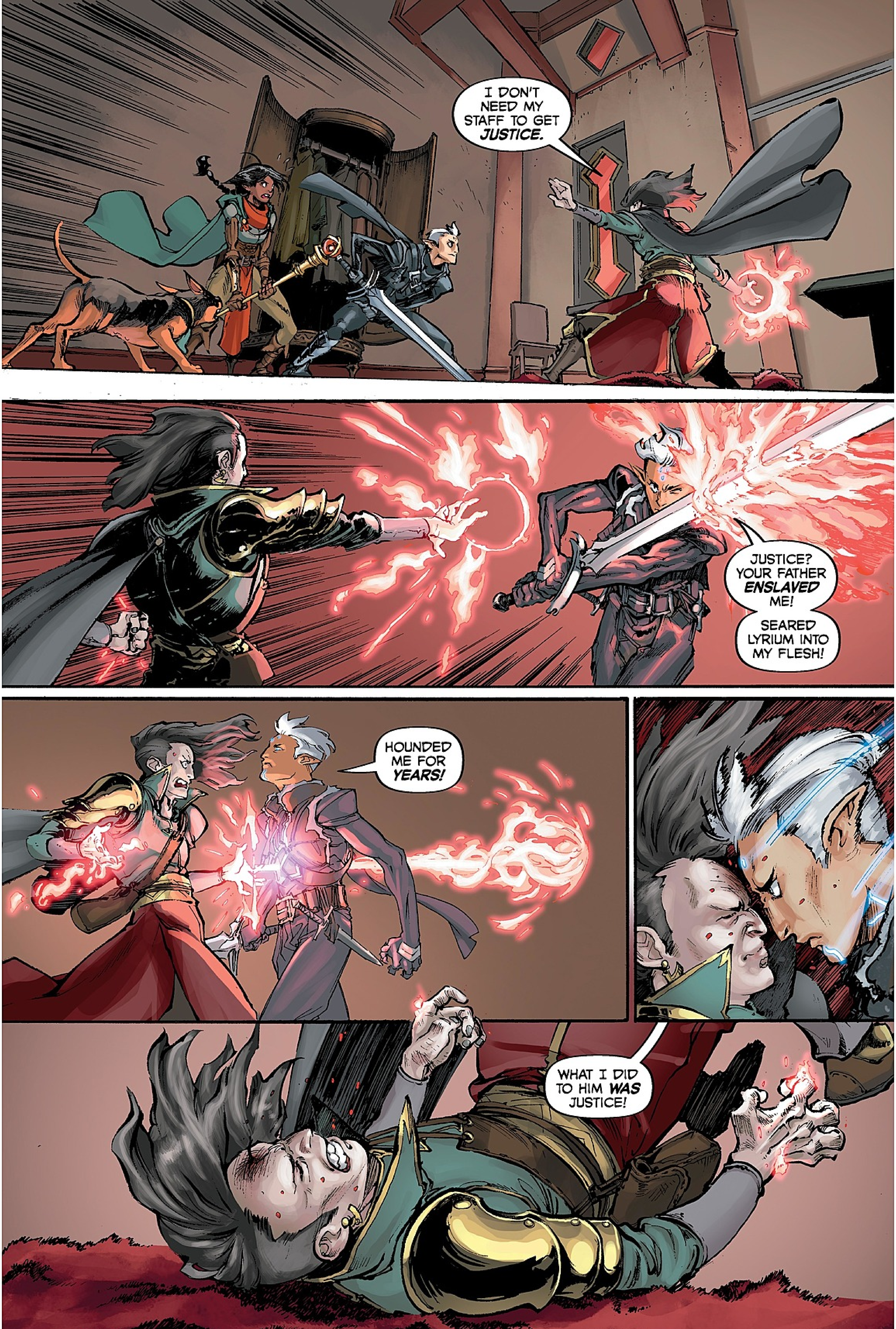

YOU SHOULD GO TALK TO HIM.
NO. I CAN'T PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON HIM. THIS HAS TO BE *HIS* DECISION.
HOW ARE *YOU* DOING?
HONESTLY? I DON'T KNOW.
YOU WORK FOR...WELL, YOU DO A LOT OF COVERT WORK.
HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO *KILL* ANYONE YOU CARE ABOUT?
I'VE NEVER KILLED... *ANYONE.*
I'VE FOUGHT, KEPT OTHERS SAFE, BUT SER AARON--OR SOMEBODY ELSE--DOES THE ACTUAL KILLING.
MARIUS... THE KILLING. DOES IT EVER BECOME... EASY?
YES.

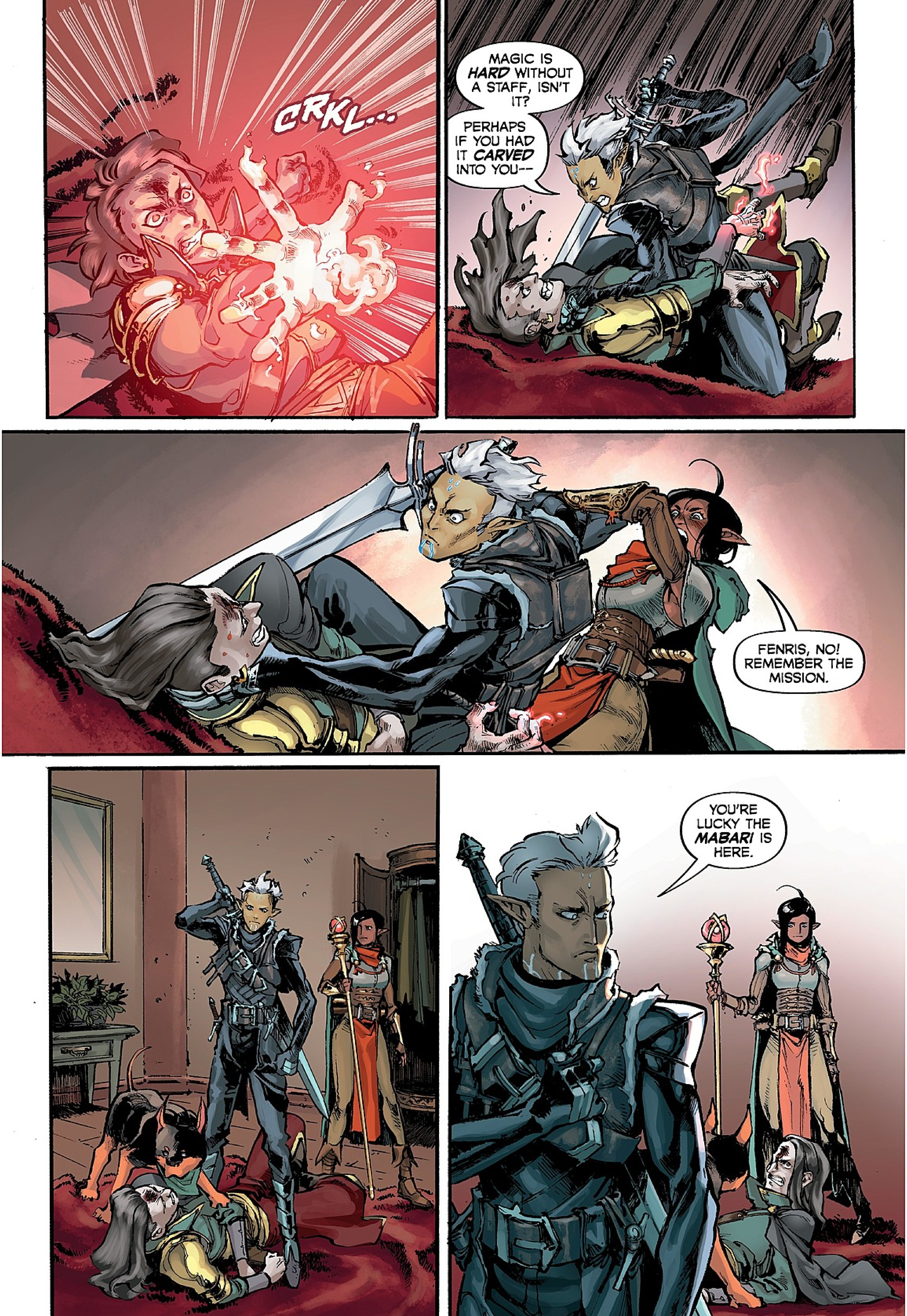

BUT THAT CAN BE *WORSE.*
NO. THAT'S *NOT* WHAT HAUNTS HIM.
I'VE SEEN THAT LOOK BEFORE. JUST AFTER WE FOUND THE CHAMPION OF KIRKWALL'S MOTHER, DEAD.
THAT IS THE LOOK OF SOMEONE HAUNTED BY *FAILURE.*
TESSA...DID YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO WORKS AT THE CASTELLUM?
NO. I FOUND *DANARIUS.*

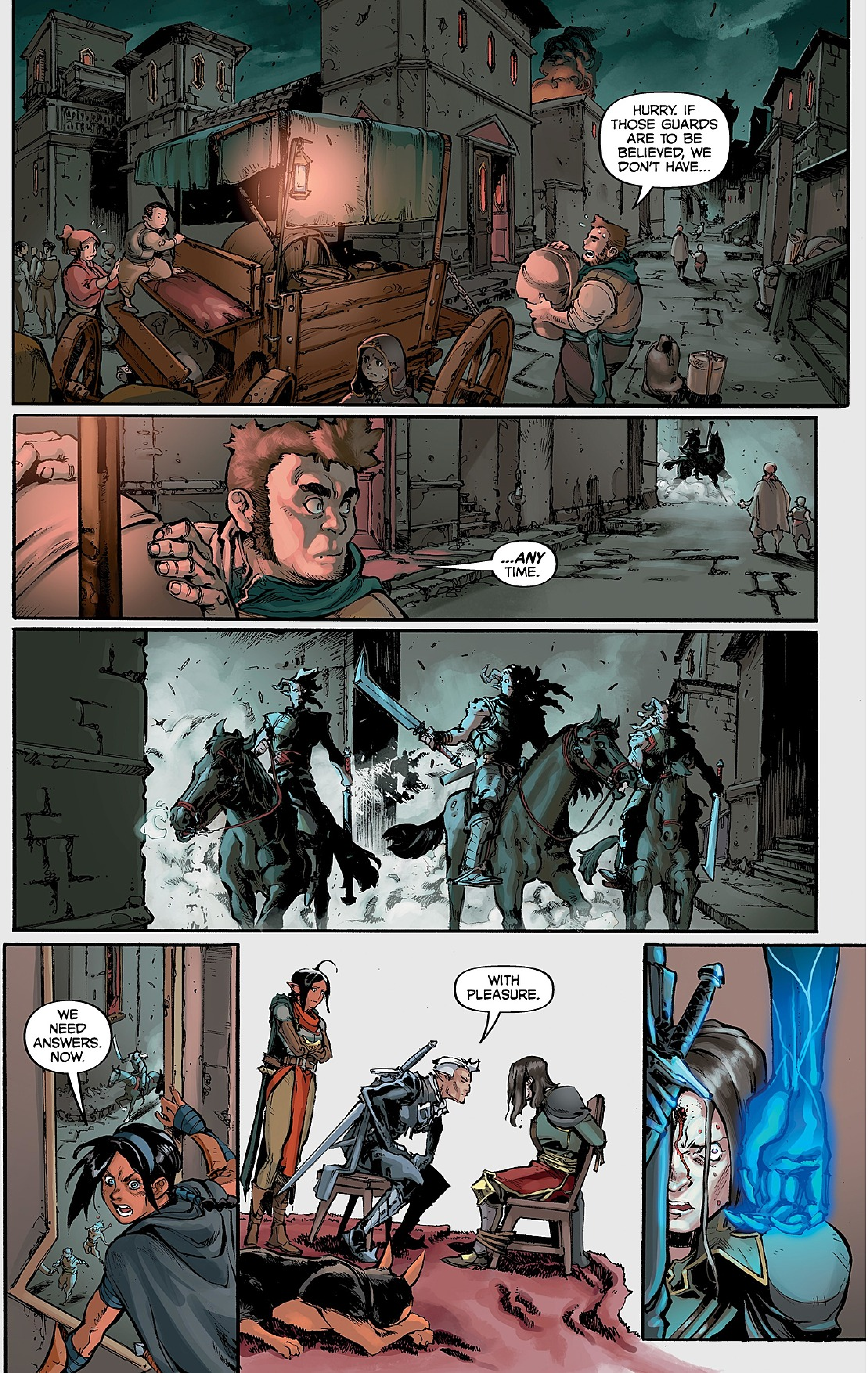

DANARIUS IS *DEAD*. I KILLED HIM MYSELF.
THIS IS HIS *SON*.
DANARIUS HAS NO HEIRS. I DEALT WITH *THEM* AS WELL.
RIGHT... REMIND ME NOT TO PISS *YOU* OFF, THEN.
BUT THIS GUY... *TRACTUS* DANARIUS. RUMOR HAS IT HE WAS A BASTARD SON. RECENTLY RECOGNIZED AS A DANARIUS, AND MOVED INTO THE CASTELLUM.
THOUGH TODAY, HE'S GETTING DRUNK IN THE TAVERN ON THE WEALTHY SIDE OF TOWN.
THEN I WILL END THE DANARIUS LINE A *SECOND* TIME.
NO.
WE NEED HIM ALIVE.
WORDS NO ONE HAS EVER UTTERED ABOUT A DANARIUS.
YOU WANTED SOMEONE WHO KNEW WHERE THE NEW HIDDEN PASSAGE IS, RIGHT? IS THERE ANY BETTER CANDIDATE?
VAEA IS *RIGHT*.
AS ALWAYS.

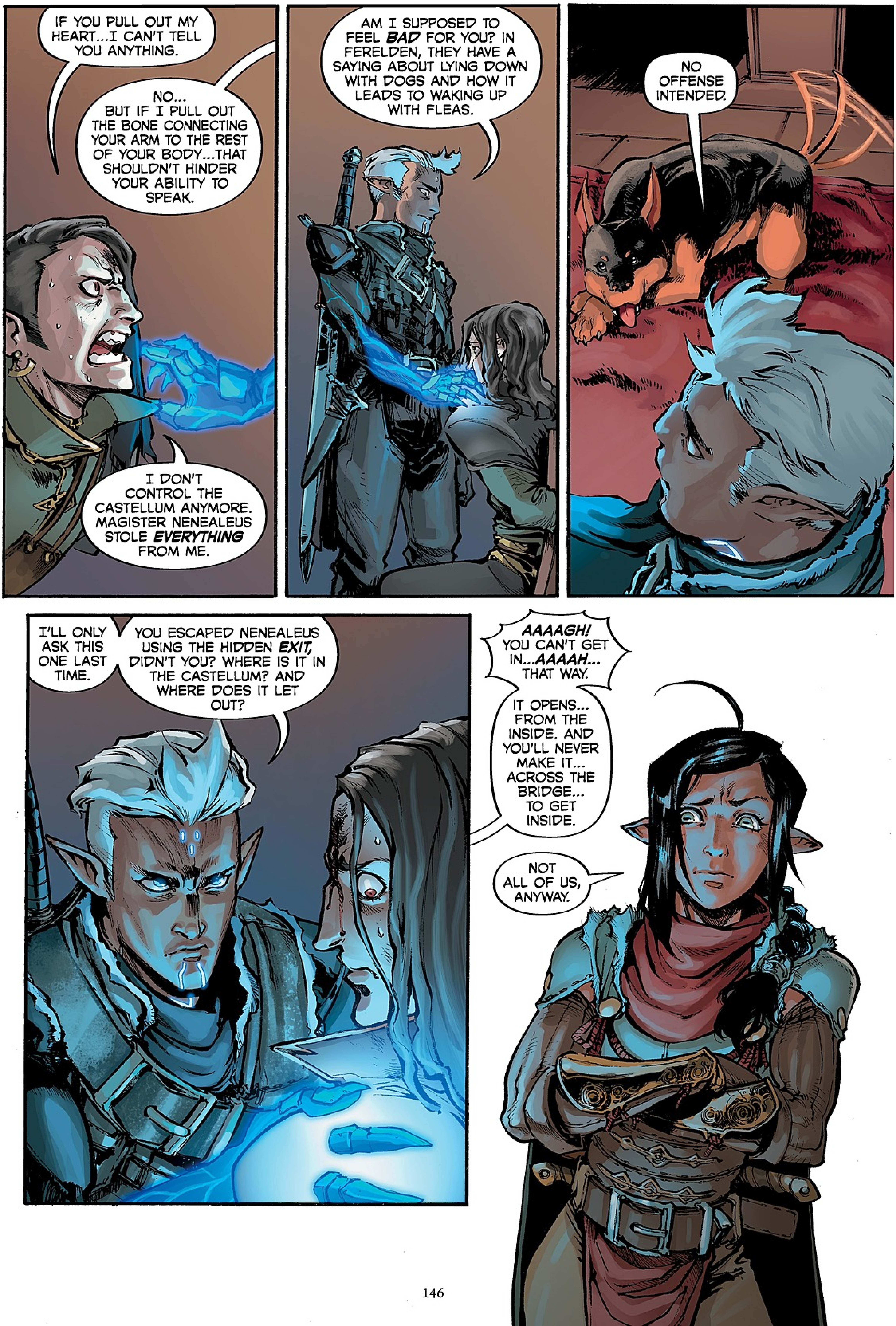

DON'T TELL *ME* I'VE HAD TOO MUCH TA DRINK!
I *OWN* THIS TOWN. I OWN TH'WHOLE REGION!
WELL, AT LEAST UNTIL THE QUNARI COME.
I AM *NOT* TO BE DISTURBED. AN' IF MAGISTER NENEALEUS AND HIS PERRE--PERRE--WHATEVER COME LOOKING FOR ME...
KILL 'EM BOTH.
OF COURSE.
WE'LL KEEP YOU SAFE.

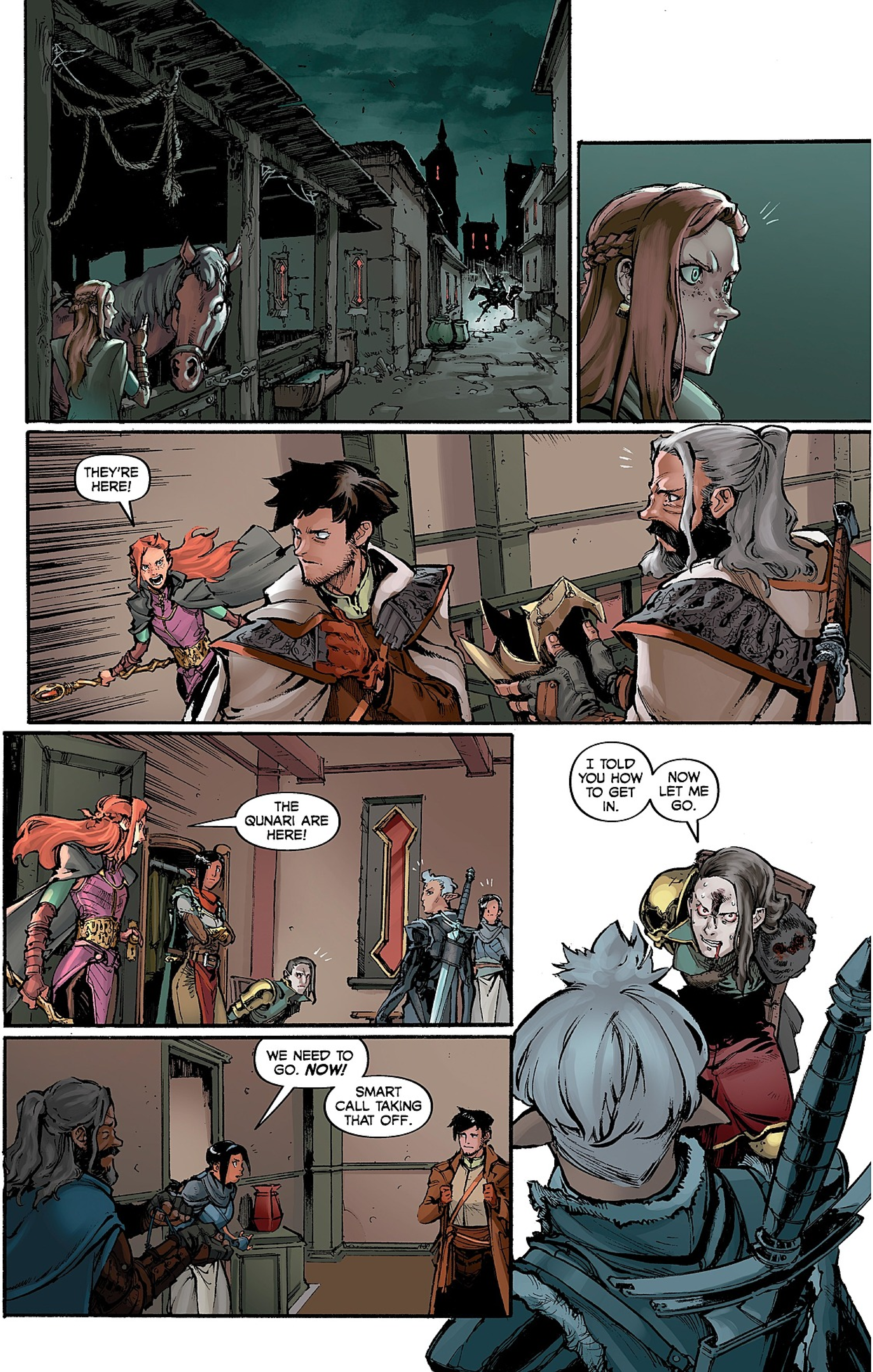

WHAT IN THE MAKER--
GUARDS!
YOU!
YOU MURDERED MY FATHER.

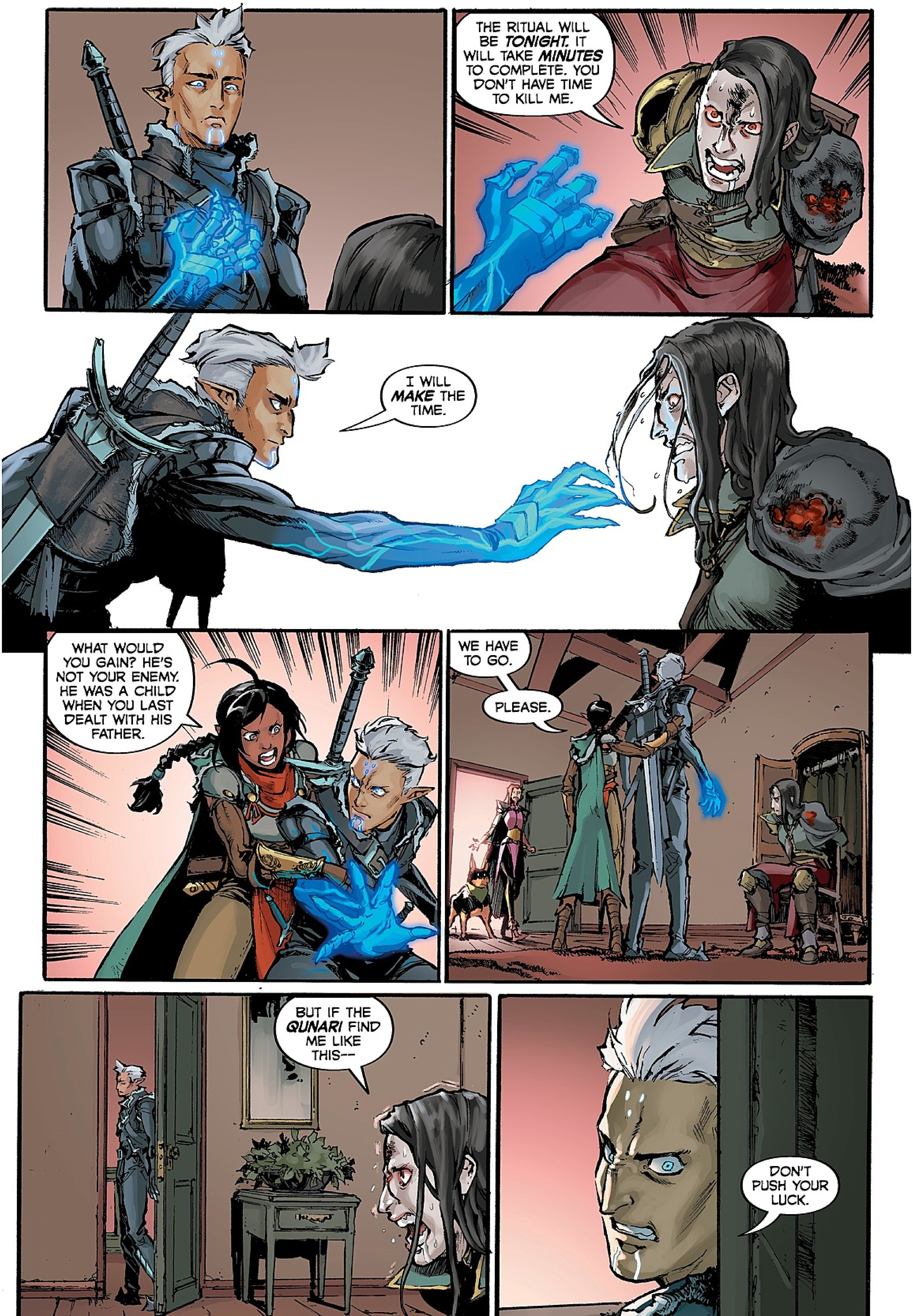

I DON'T NEED MY STAFF TO GET *JUSTICE.*
JUSTICE? YOUR FATHER *ENSLAVED* ME!
SEARED LYRIUM INTO MY FLESH!
HOUNDED ME FOR *YEARS!*
WHAT I DID TO HIM *WAS* JUSTICE!

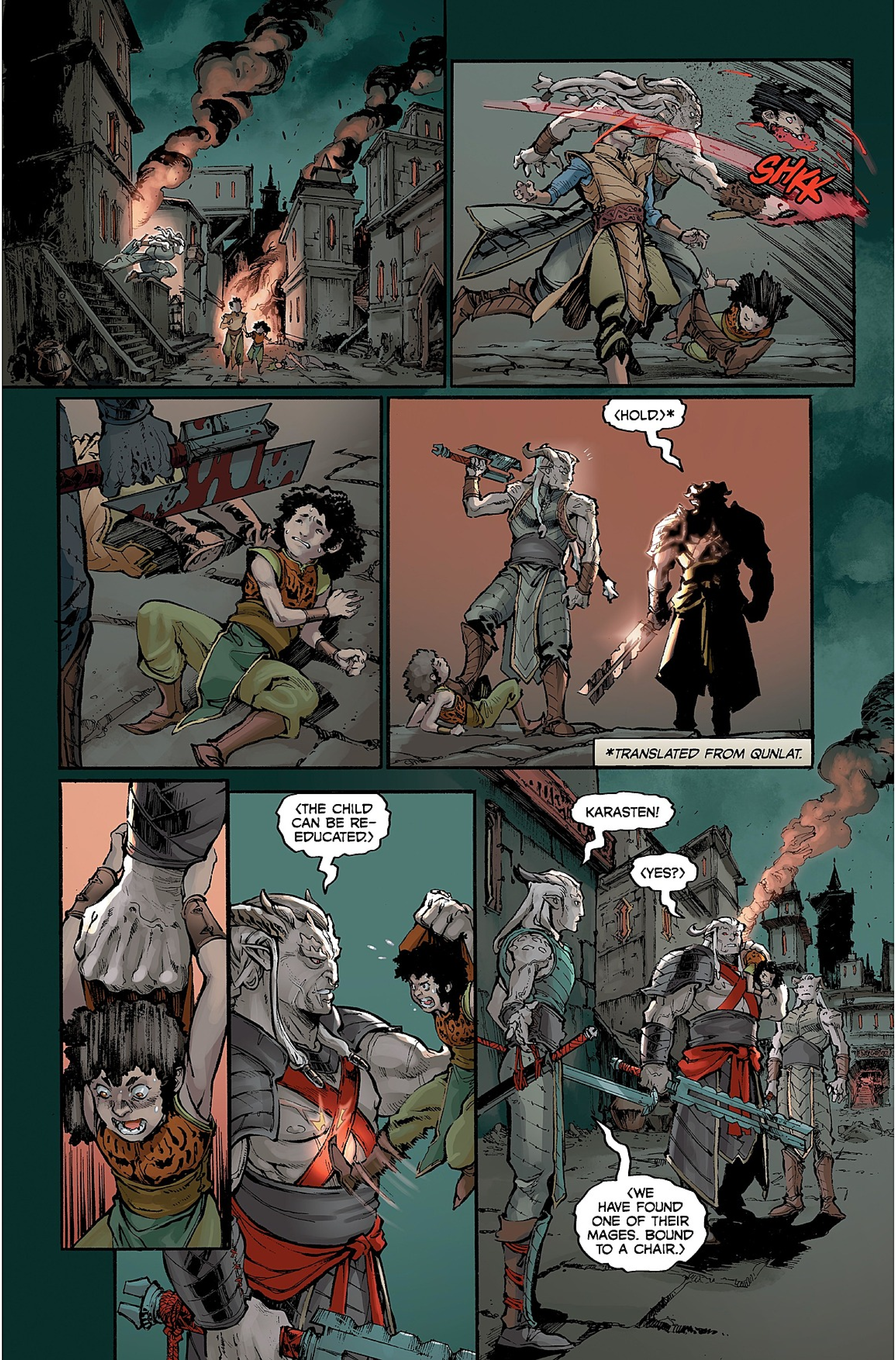

CRKL...
MAGIC IS *HARD* WITHOUT A STAFF, ISN'T IT?
PERHAPS IF YOU HAD IT *CARVED* INTO YOU--
FENRIS, NO! REMEMBER THE MISSION.
YOU'RE LUCKY THE *MABARI* IS HERE.

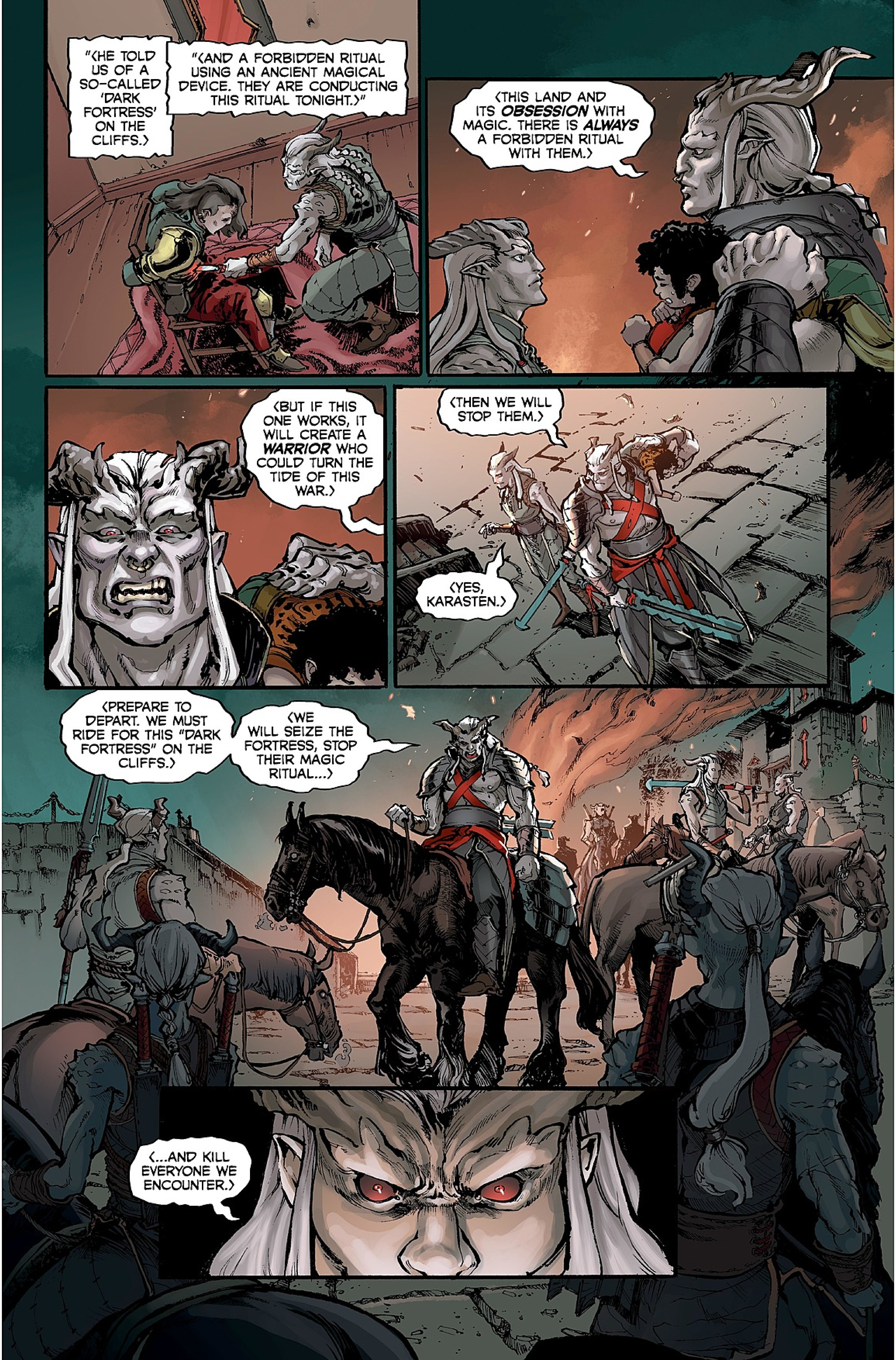

HURRY. IF THOSE GUARDS ARE TO BE BELIEVED, WE DON'T HAVE...
...*ANY* TIME.
WE NEED ANSWERS. NOW.
WITH PLEASURE.

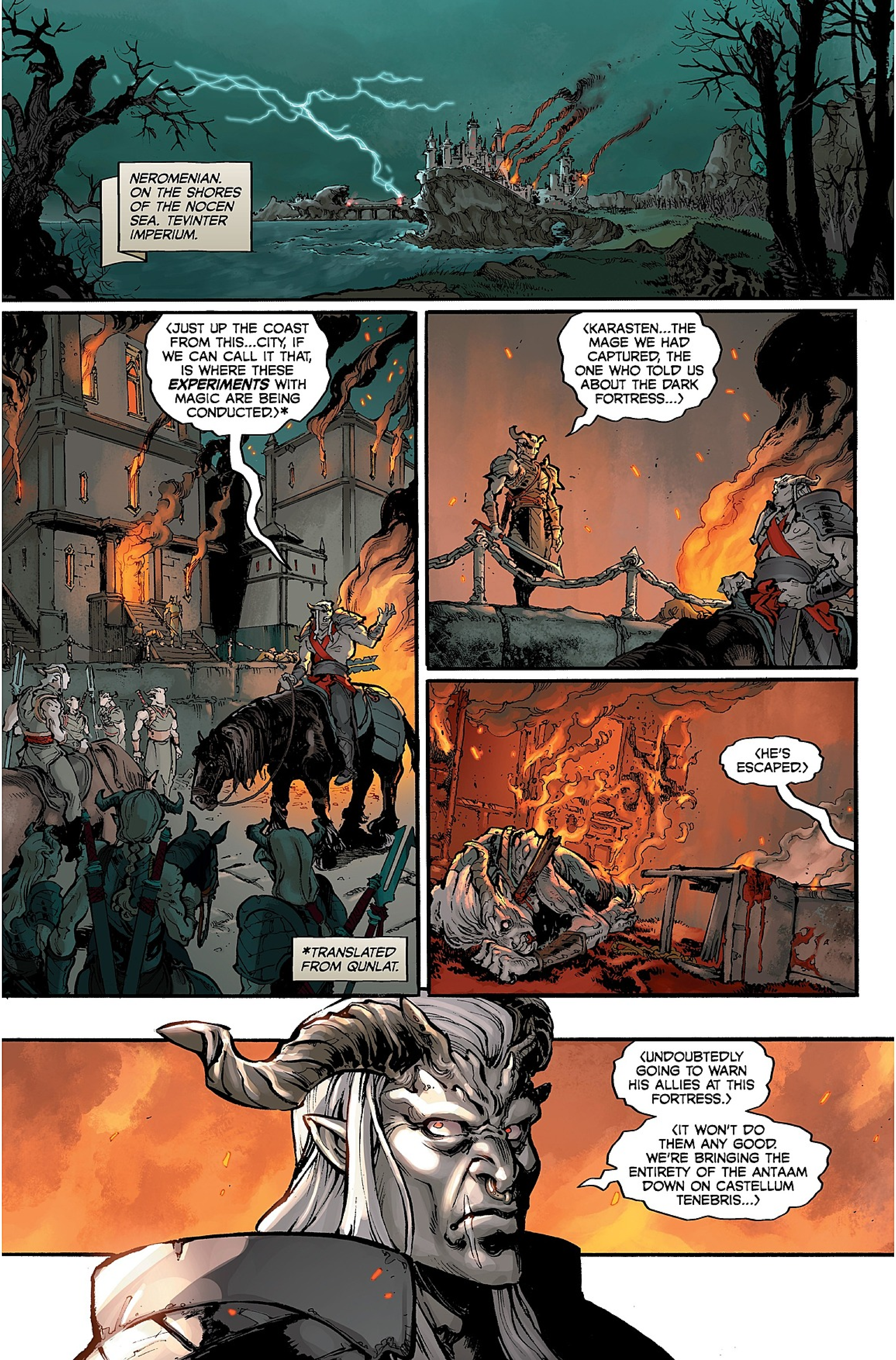

IF YOU PULL OUT MY HEART...I CAN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING.
NO... BUT IF I PULL OUT THE BONE CONNECTING YOUR ARM TO THE REST OF YOUR BODY...THAT SHOULDN'T HINDER YOUR ABILITY TO SPEAK.
I DON'T CONTROL THE CASTELLUM ANYMORE. MAGISTER NENEALEUS STOLE *EVERYTHING* FROM ME.
AM I SUPPOSED TO FEEL *BAD* FOR YOU? IN FERELDEN, THEY HAVE A SAYING ABOUT LYING DOWN WITH DOGS AND HOW IT LEADS TO WAKING UP WITH FLEAS.
NO OFFENSE INTENDED.
I'LL ONLY ASK THIS ONE LAST TIME.
YOU ESCAPED NENEALEUS USING THE HIDDEN *EXIT,* DIDN'T YOU? WHERE IS IT IN THE CASTELLUM? AND WHERE DOES IT LET OUT?
AAAAGH! YOU CAN'T GET IN...*AAAAH...* THAT WAY.
IT OPENS... FROM THE INSIDE. AND YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT... ACROSS THE BRIDGE... TO GET INSIDE.
NOT ALL OF US, ANYWAY.

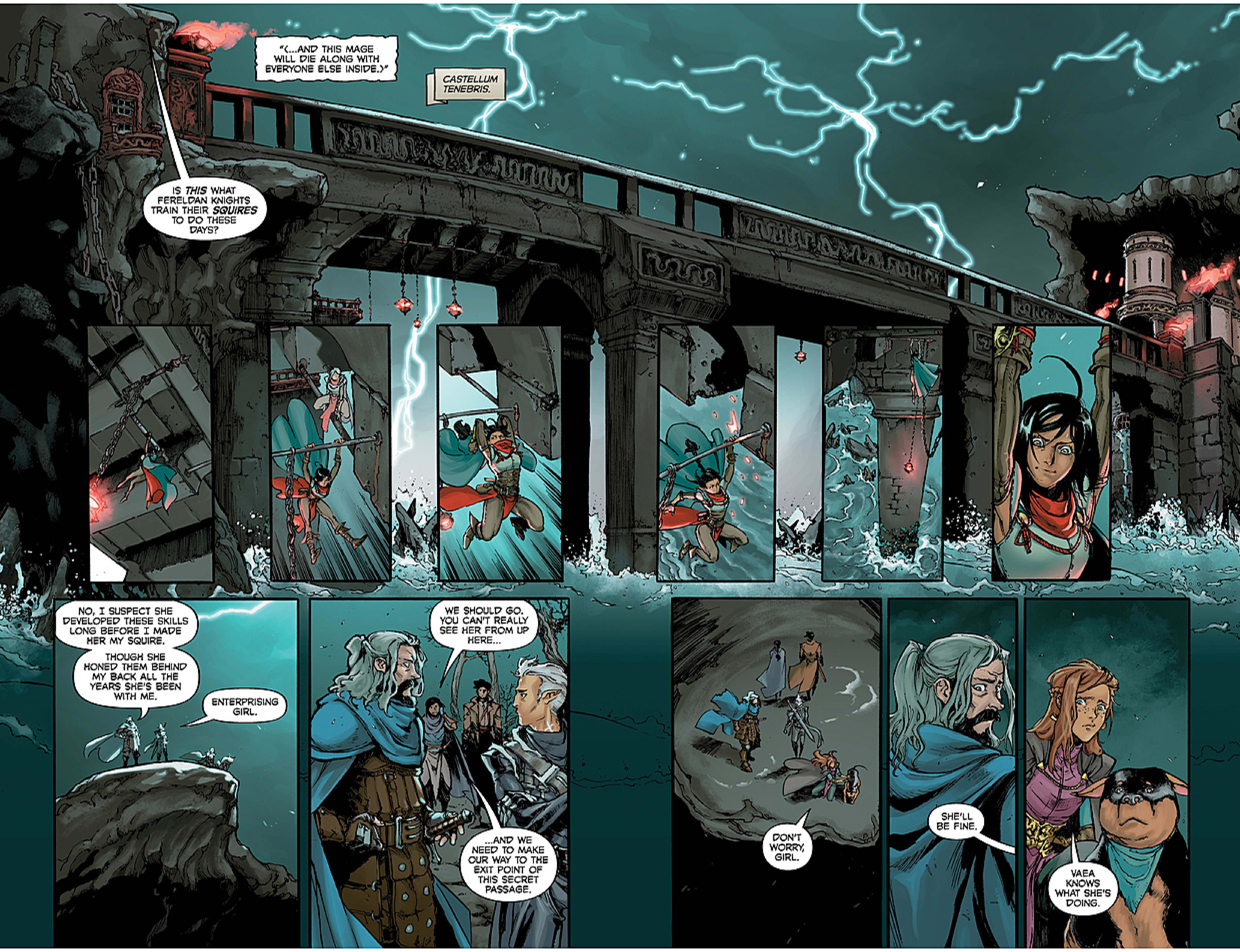

THEY'RE HERE!
THE QUNARI ARE HERE!
WE NEED TO GO. *NOW!*
SMART CALL TAKING THAT OFF.
I TOLD YOU HOW TO GET IN.
NOW LET ME GO.

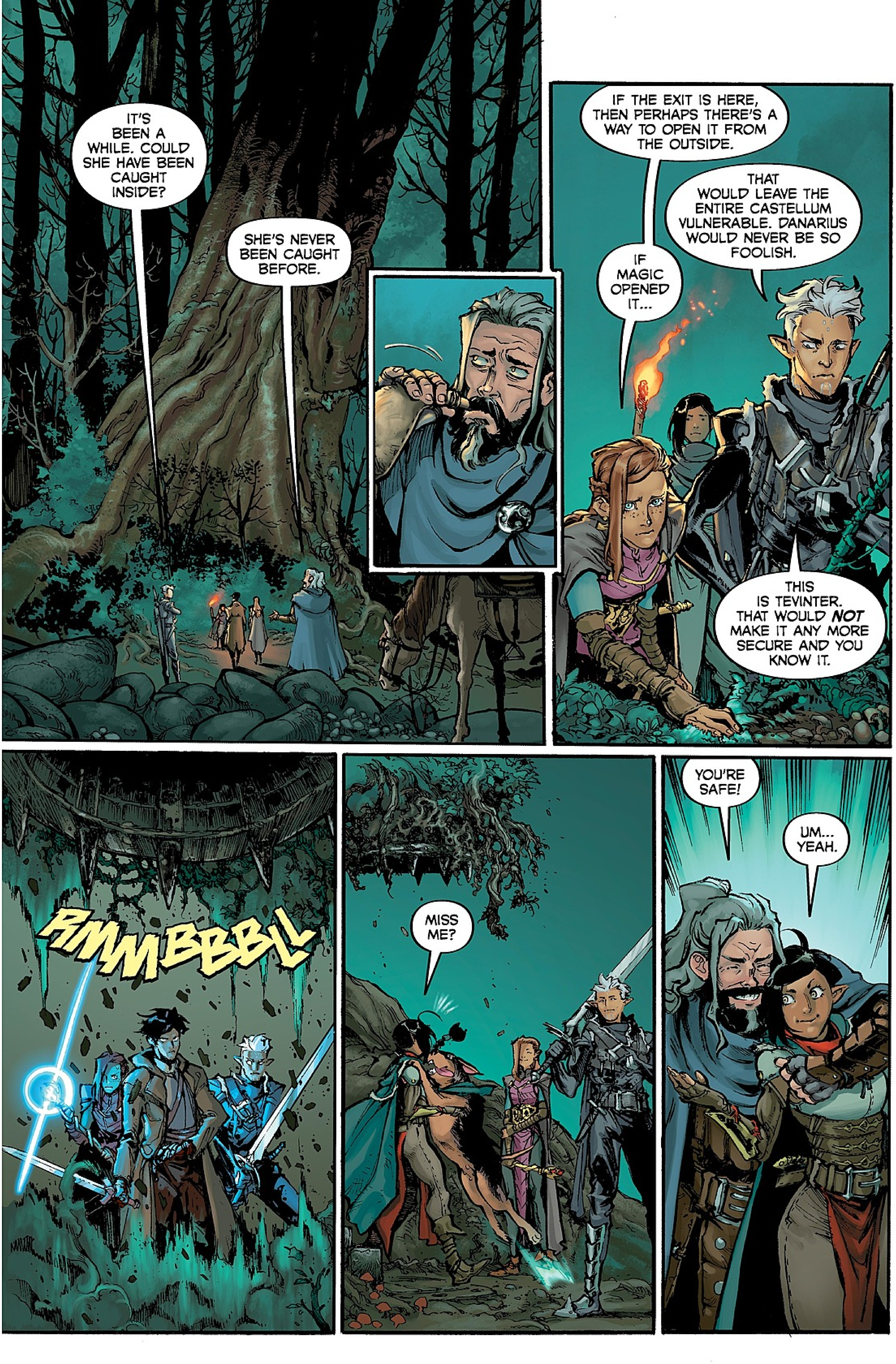

THE RITUAL WILL BE *TONIGHT.* IT WILL TAKE *MINUTES* TO COMPLETE. YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO KILL ME.
I WILL *MAKE* THE TIME.
WHAT WOULD YOU GAIN? HE'S NOT YOUR ENEMY. HE WAS A CHILD WHEN YOU LAST DEALT WITH HIS FATHER.
WE HAVE TO GO.
PLEASE.
BUT IF THE *QUNARI* FIND ME LIKE THIS--
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.

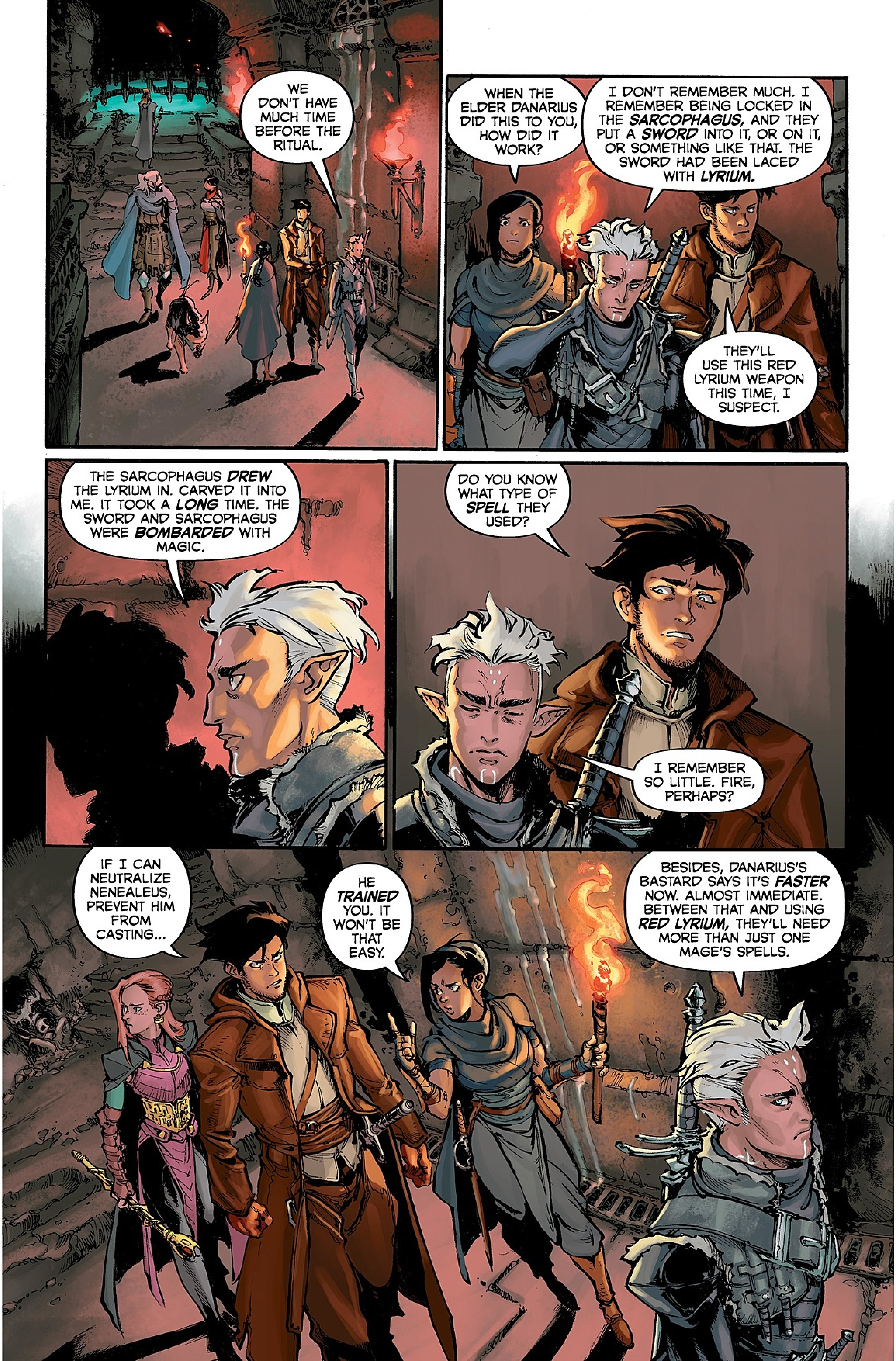

SHKK
⟨HOLD.⟩*
*TRANSLATED FROM QUNLAT.
⟨THE CHILD CAN BE RE-EDUCATED.⟩
KARASTEN!
⟨YES?⟩
⟨WE HAVE FOUND ONE OF THEIR MAGES. BOUND TO A CHAIR.⟩

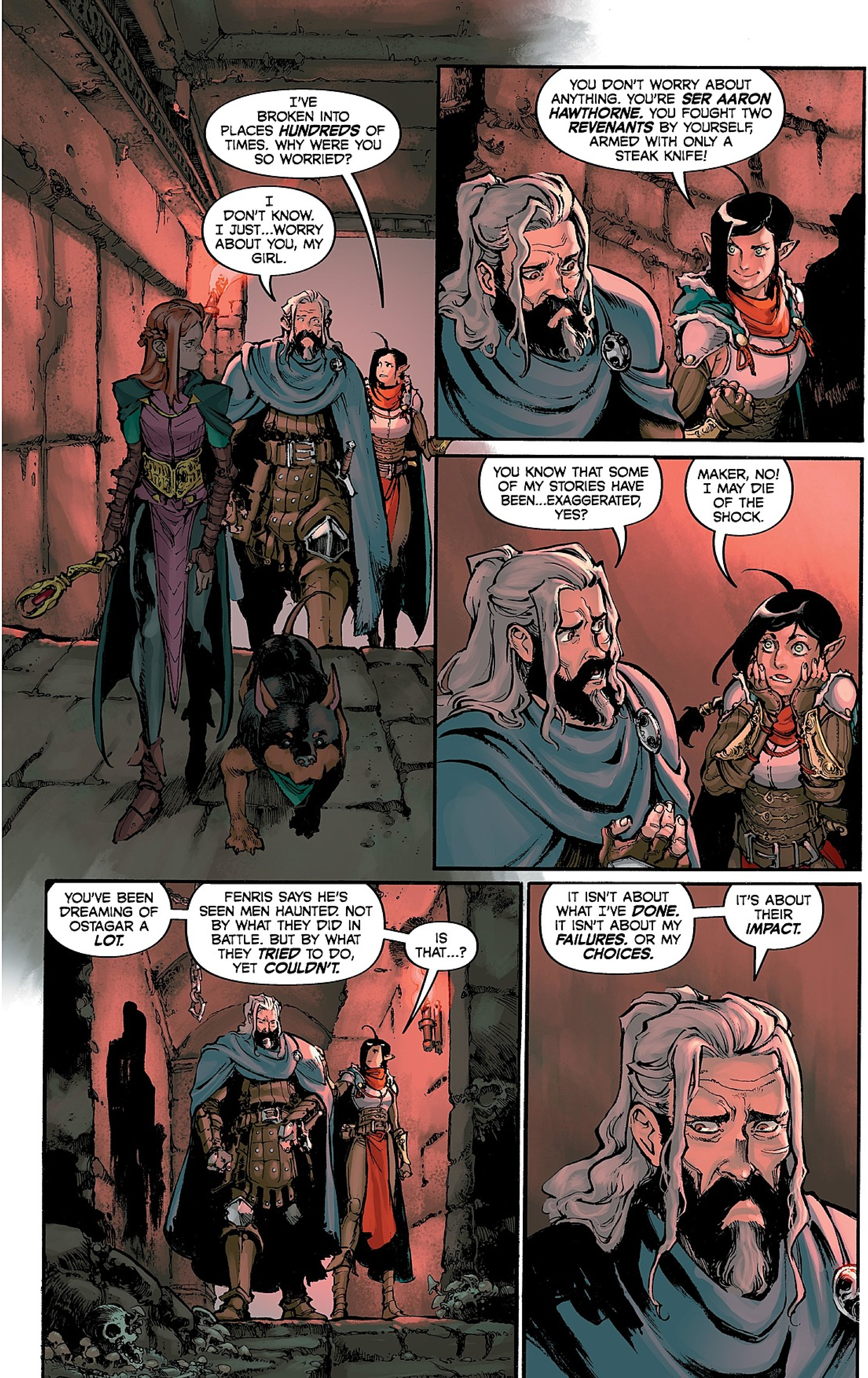

"<HE TOLD US OF A SO-CALLED 'DARK FORTRESS' ON THE CLIFFS.>
"<AND A FORBIDDEN RITUAL USING AN ANCIENT MAGICAL DEVICE. THEY ARE CONDUCTING THIS RITUAL TONIGHT.>"
<THIS LAND AND ITS *OBSESSION* WITH MAGIC. THERE IS *ALWAYS* A FORBIDDEN RITUAL WITH THEM.>
<BUT IF THIS ONE WORKS, IT WILL CREATE A *WARRIOR* WHO COULD TURN THE TIDE OF THIS WAR.>
<THEN WE WILL STOP THEM.>
<YES, KARASTEN.>
<PREPARE TO DEPART. WE MUST RIDE FOR THIS "DARK FORTRESS" ON THE CLIFFS.>
<WE WILL SEIZE THE FORTRESS, STOP THEIR MAGIC RITUAL...>
<...AND KILL EVERYONE WE ENCOUNTER.>

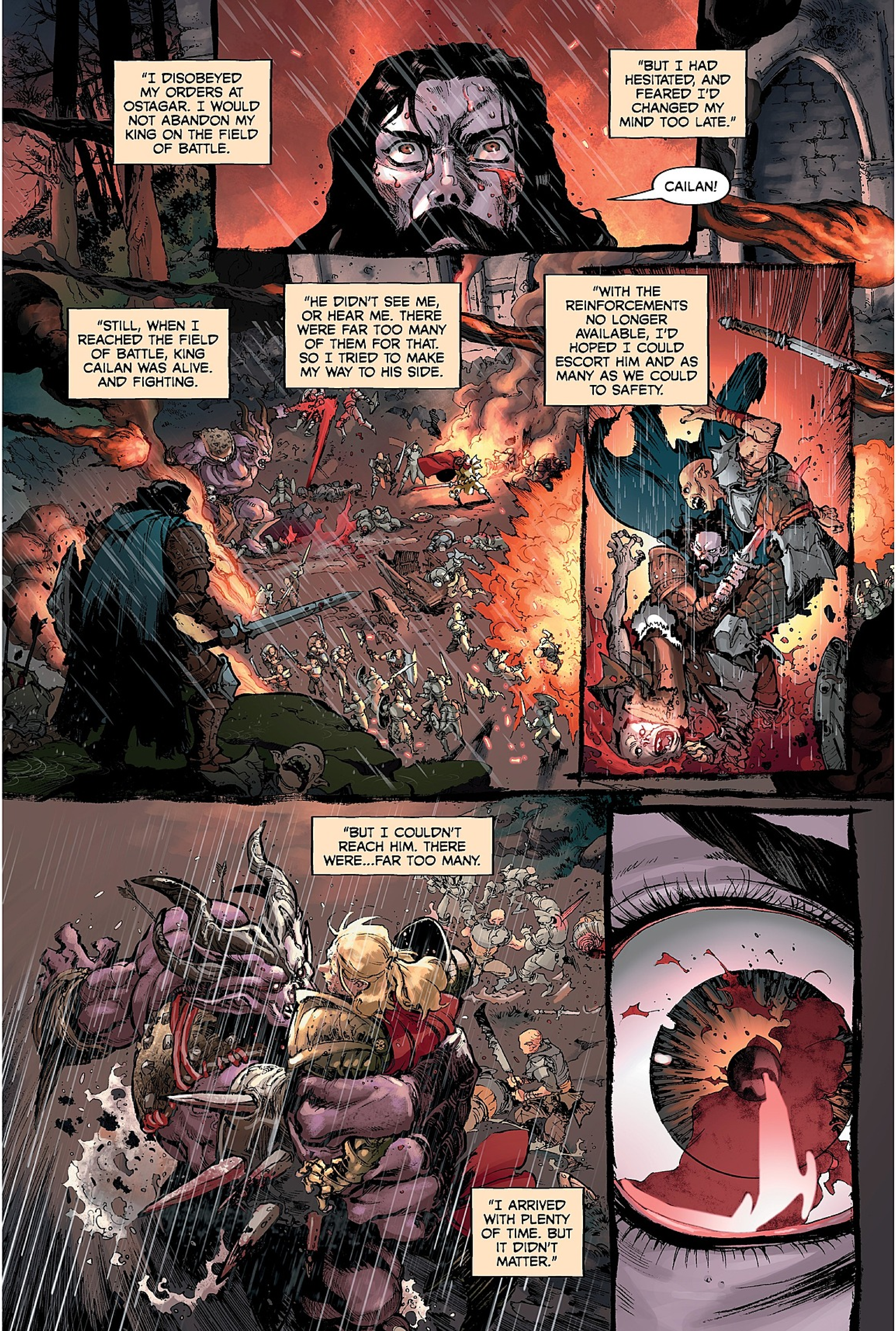

NEROMENIAN. ON THE SHORES OF THE NOCEN SEA. TEVINTER IMPERIUM.
‹JUST UP THE COAST FROM THIS...CITY, IF WE CAN CALL IT THAT, IS WHERE THESE **EXPERIMENTS** WITH MAGIC ARE BEING CONDUCTED.›*
*TRANSLATED FROM QUNLAT.
‹KARASTEN...THE MAGE WE HAD CAPTURED, THE ONE WHO TOLD US ABOUT THE DARK FORTRESS...›
‹HE'S ESCAPED.›
‹UNDOUBTEDLY GOING TO WARN HIS ALLIES AT THIS FORTRESS.›
‹IT WON'T DO THEM ANY GOOD. WE'RE BRINGING THE ENTIRETY OF THE ANTAAM DOWN ON CASTELLUM TENEBRIS...›

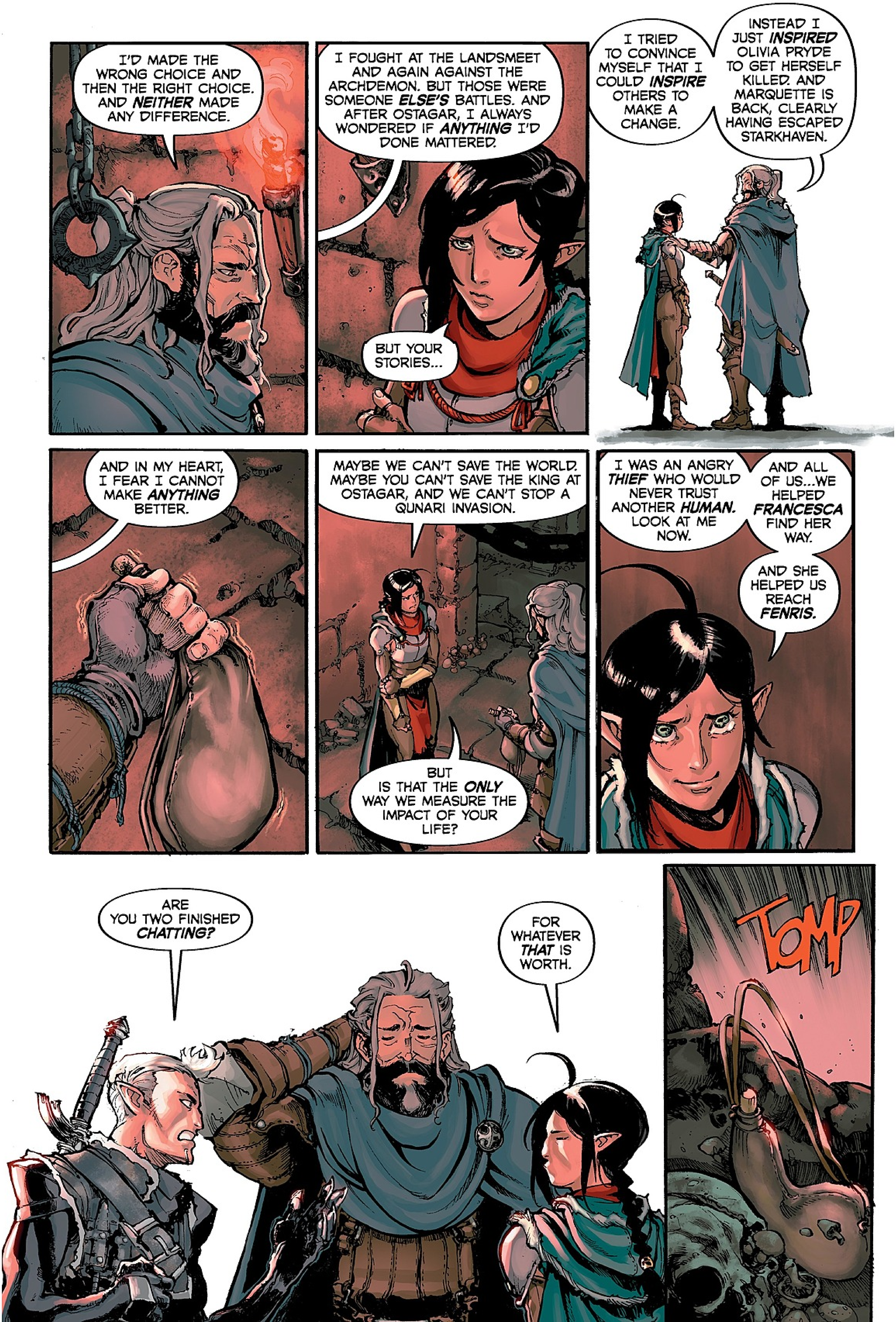

"(...AND THIS MAGE WILL DIE ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE INSIDE.)"
CASTELLUM TENEBRIS.
IS *THIS* WHAT FERELDAN KNIGHTS TRAIN THEIR *SQUIRES* TO DO THESE DAYS?
NO, I SUSPECT SHE DEVELOPED THESE SKILLS LONG BEFORE I MADE HER MY SQUIRE.
THOUGH SHE HONED THEM BEHIND MY BACK ALL THE YEARS SHE'S BEEN WITH ME.
ENTERPRISING GIRL.
WE SHOULD GO. YOU CAN'T REALLY SEE HER FROM UP HERE...
...AND WE NEED TO MAKE OUR WAY TO THE EXIT POINT OF THIS SECRET PASSAGE.
DON'T WORRY, GIRL.
SHE'LL BE FINE.
VAEA KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING.

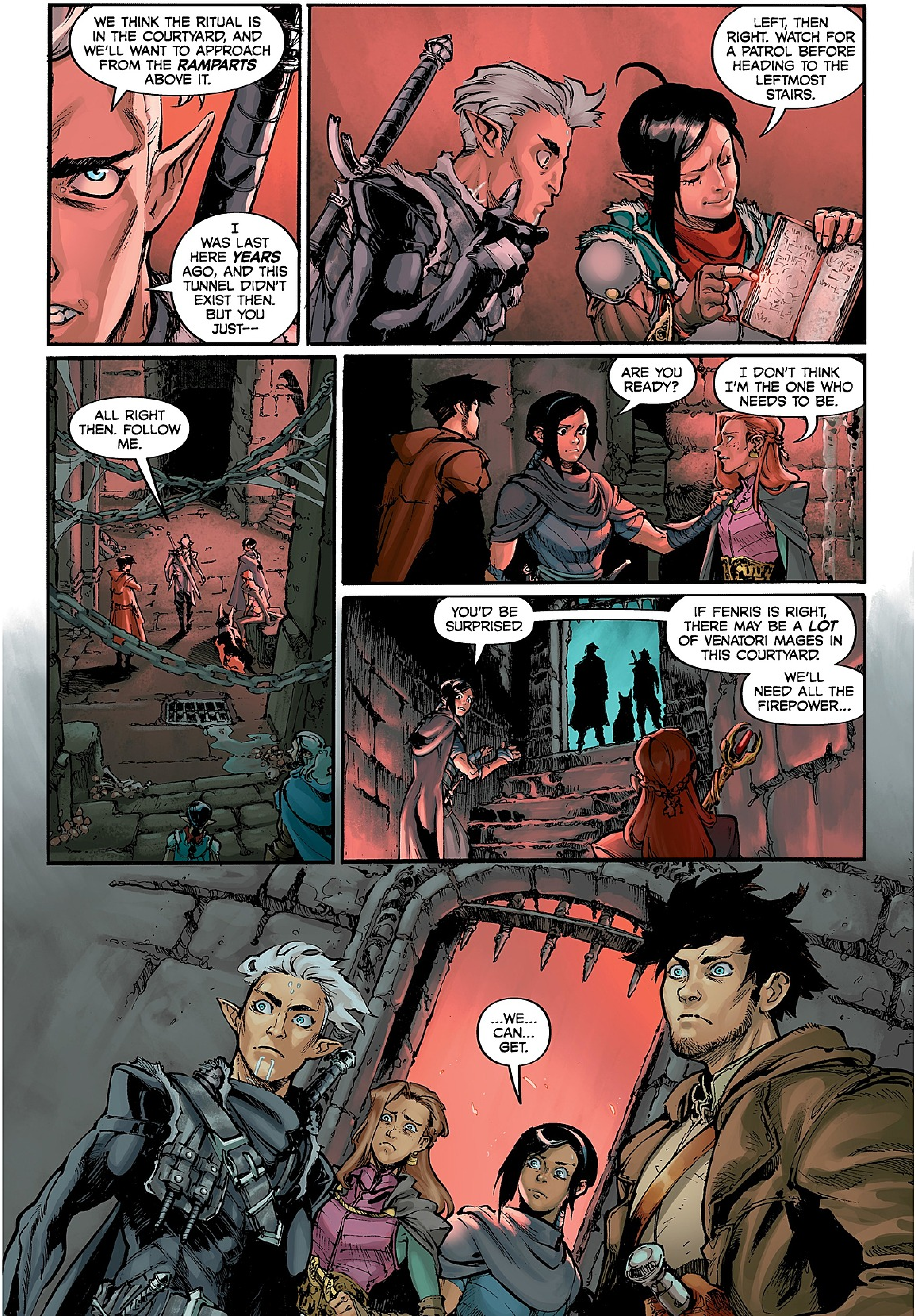

IT'S BEEN A WHILE. COULD SHE HAVE BEEN CAUGHT INSIDE?
SHE'S NEVER BEEN CAUGHT BEFORE.
IF THE EXIT IS HERE, THEN PERHAPS THERE'S A WAY TO OPEN IT FROM THE OUTSIDE.
IF MAGIC OPENED IT...
THAT WOULD LEAVE THE ENTIRE CASTELLUM VULNERABLE. DANARIUS WOULD NEVER BE SO FOOLISH.
THIS IS TEVINTER. THAT WOULD *NOT* MAKE IT ANY MORE SECURE AND YOU KNOW IT.
RMMBBBL!
MISS ME?
YOU'RE SAFE!
UM... YEAH.

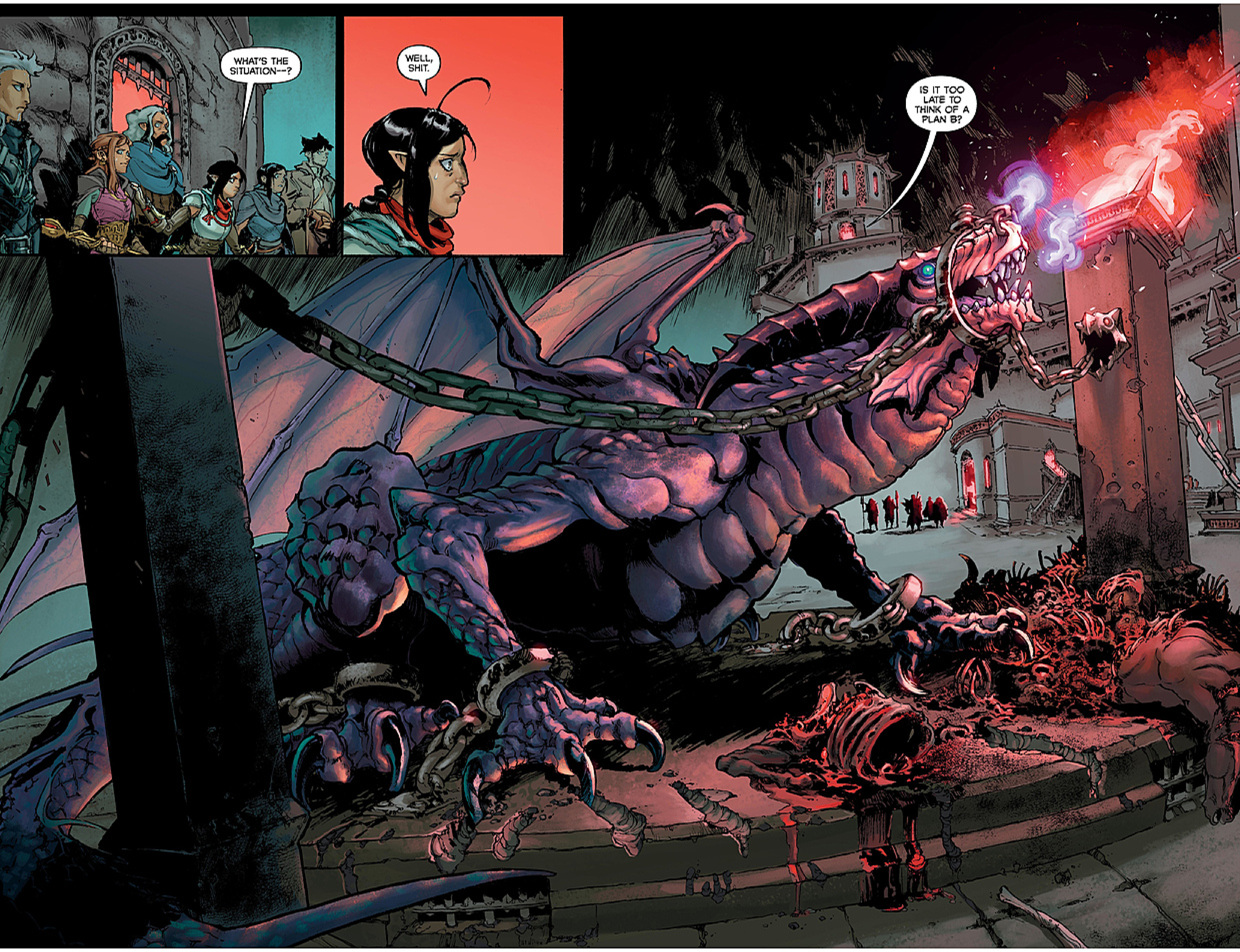

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME BEFORE THE RITUAL.
WHEN THE ELDER DANARIUS DID THIS TO YOU, HOW DID IT WORK?
I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH. I REMEMBER BEING LOCKED IN THE *SARCOPHAGUS,* AND THEY PUT A *SWORD* INTO IT, OR ON IT, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THE SWORD HAD BEEN LACED WITH *LYRIUM.*
THEY'LL USE THIS RED LYRIUM WEAPON THIS TIME, I SUSPECT.
THE SARCOPHAGUS *DREW* THE LYRIUM IN. CARVED IT INTO ME. IT TOOK A *LONG* TIME. THE SWORD AND SARCOPHAGUS WERE *BOMBARDED* WITH MAGIC.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT TYPE OF *SPELL* THEY USED?
I REMEMBER SO LITTLE. FIRE, PERHAPS?
IF I CAN NEUTRALIZE NENEALEUS, PREVENT HIM FROM CASTING...
HE *TRAINED* YOU. IT WON'T BE THAT EASY.
BESIDES, DANARIUS'S BASTARD SAYS IT'S *FASTER* NOW. ALMOST IMMEDIATE. BETWEEN THAT AND USING *RED LYRIUM,* THEY'LL NEED MORE THAN JUST ONE MAGE'S SPELLS.

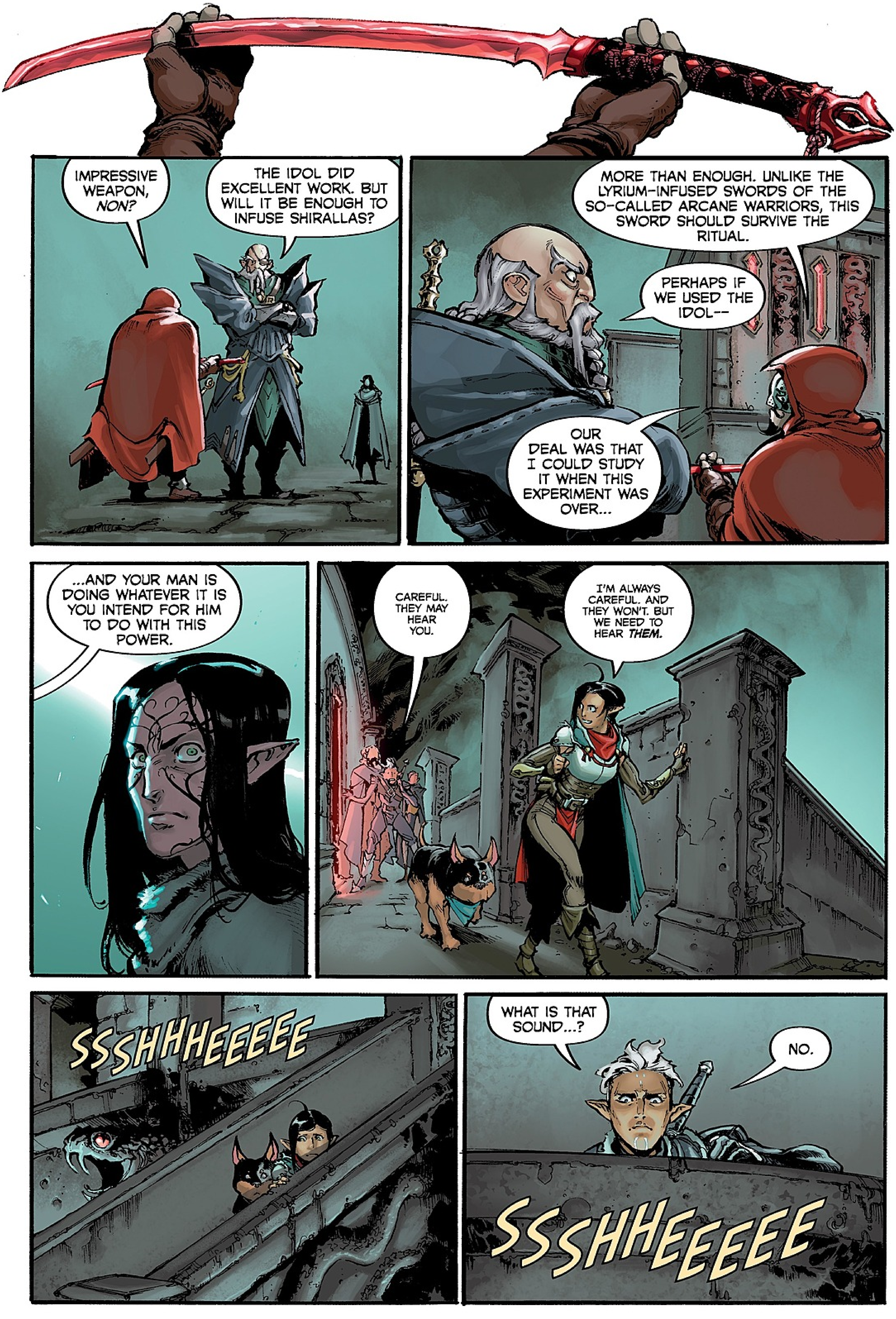

I'VE BROKEN INTO PLACES *HUNDREDS* OF TIMES. WHY WERE YOU SO WORRIED?
I DON'T KNOW. I JUST...WORRY ABOUT YOU, MY GIRL.
YOU DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING. YOU'RE *SER AARON HAWTHORNE.* YOU FOUGHT TWO *REVENANTS* BY YOURSELF, ARMED WITH ONLY A STEAK KNIFE!
YOU KNOW THAT SOME OF MY STORIES HAVE BEEN...EXAGGERATED, YES?
MAKER, NO! I MAY DIE OF THE SHOCK.
YOU'VE BEEN DREAMING OF OSTAGAR A *LOT.*
FENRIS SAYS HE'S SEEN MEN HAUNTED. NOT BY WHAT THEY DID IN BATTLE. BUT BY WHAT THEY *TRIED* TO DO, YET *COULDN'T.*
IS THAT...?
IT ISN'T ABOUT WHAT I'VE *DONE.* IT ISN'T ABOUT MY *FAILURES.* OR MY *CHOICES.*
IT'S ABOUT THEIR *IMPACT.*

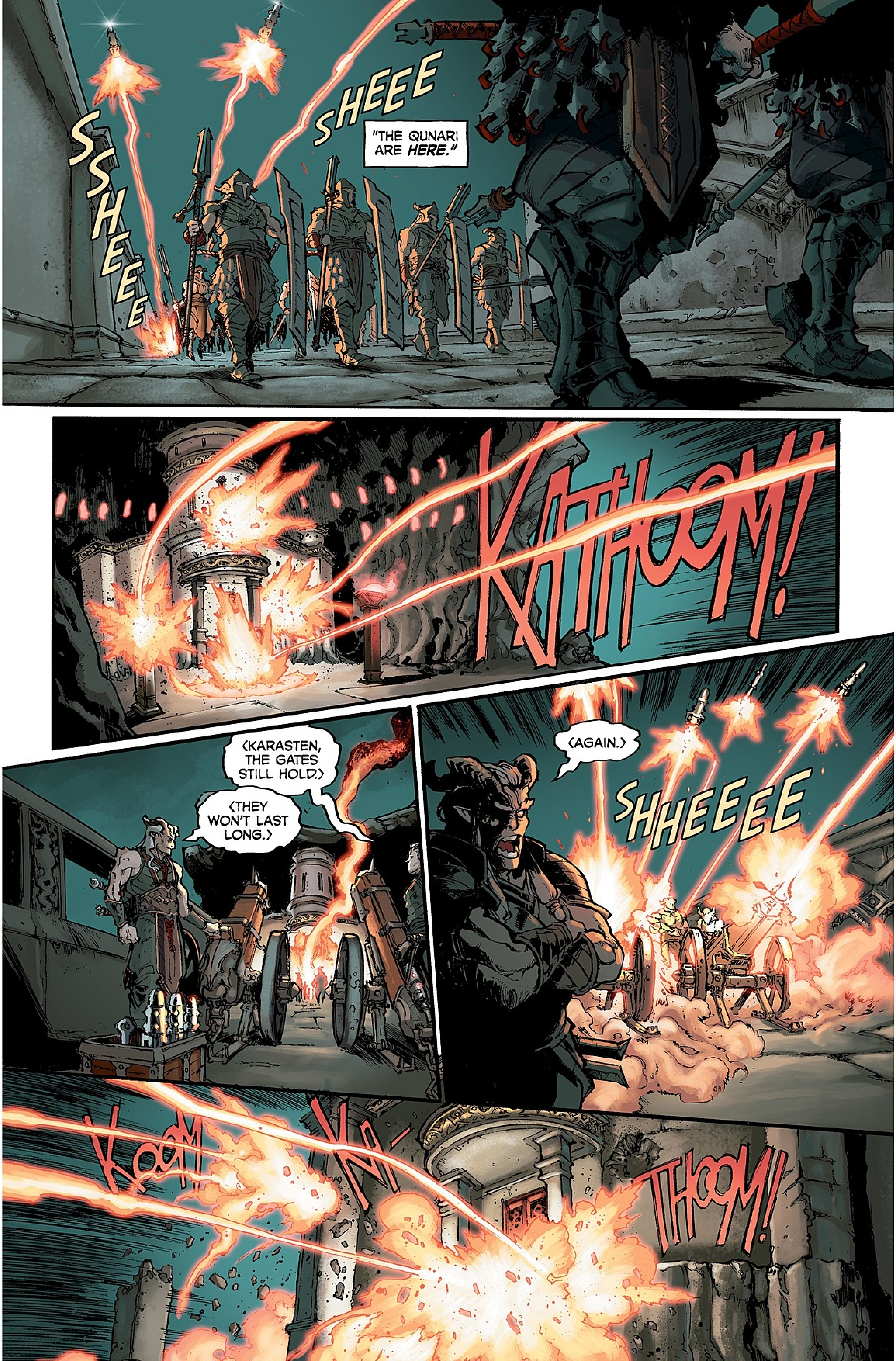

"I DISOBEYED MY ORDERS AT OSTAGAR. I WOULD NOT ABANDON MY KING ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.
"BUT I HAD HESITATED, AND FEARED I'D CHANGED MY MIND TOO LATE."
CAILAN!
"STILL, WHEN I REACHED THE FIELD OF BATTLE, KING CAILAN WAS ALIVE. AND FIGHTING.
"HE DIDN'T SEE ME, OR HEAR ME. THERE WERE FAR TOO MANY OF THEM FOR THAT. SO I TRIED TO MAKE MY WAY TO HIS SIDE.
"WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE, I'D HOPED I COULD ESCORT HIM AND AS MANY AS WE COULD TO SAFETY.
"BUT I COULDN'T REACH HIM. THERE WERE...FAR TOO MANY.
"I ARRIVED WITH PLENTY OF TIME. BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER."

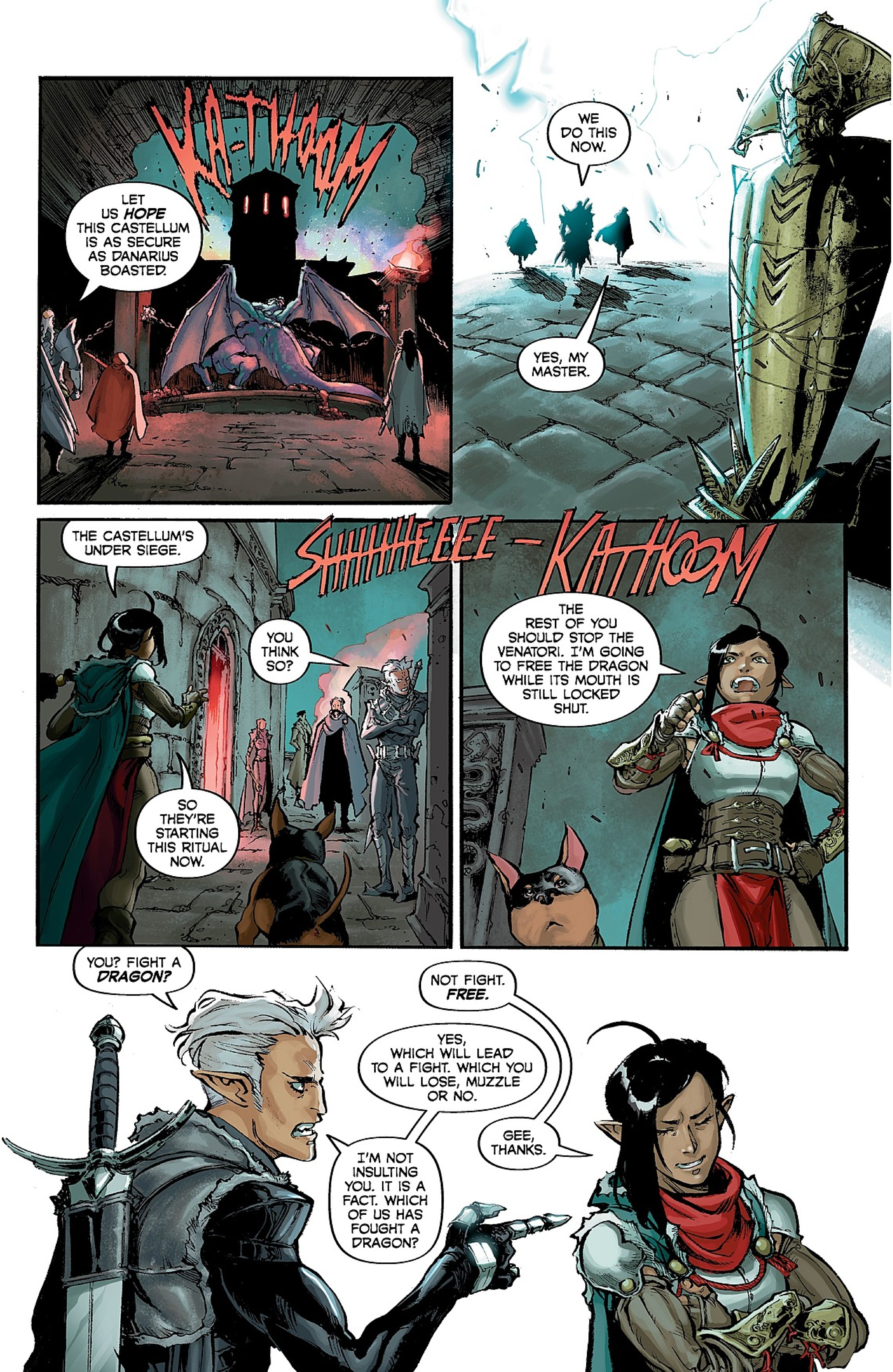

I'D MADE THE WRONG CHOICE AND THEN THE RIGHT CHOICE. AND *NEITHER* MADE ANY DIFFERENCE.
I FOUGHT AT THE LANDSMEET AND AGAIN AGAINST THE ARCHDEMON. BUT THOSE WERE SOMEONE *ELSE'S* BATTLES. AND AFTER OSTAGAR, I ALWAYS WONDERED IF *ANYTHING* I'D DONE MATTERED.
BUT YOUR STORIES...
I TRIED TO CONVINCE MYSELF THAT I COULD *INSPIRE* OTHERS TO MAKE A CHANGE.
INSTEAD I JUST *INSPIRED* OLIVIA PRYDE TO GET HERSELF KILLED. AND MARQUETTE IS BACK, CLEARLY HAVING ESCAPED STARKHAVEN.
AND IN MY HEART, I FEAR I CANNOT MAKE *ANYTHING* BETTER.
MAYBE WE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD. MAYBE YOU CAN'T SAVE THE KING AT OSTAGAR, AND WE CAN'T STOP A QUNARI INVASION.
BUT IS THAT THE *ONLY* WAY WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF YOUR LIFE?
I WAS AN ANGRY *THIEF* WHO WOULD NEVER TRUST ANOTHER *HUMAN.* LOOK AT ME NOW.
AND ALL OF US...WE HELPED *FRANCESCA* FIND HER WAY.
AND SHE HELPED US REACH *FENRIS.*
ARE YOU TWO FINISHED *CHATTING?*
FOR WHATEVER *THAT* IS WORTH.
TOMP

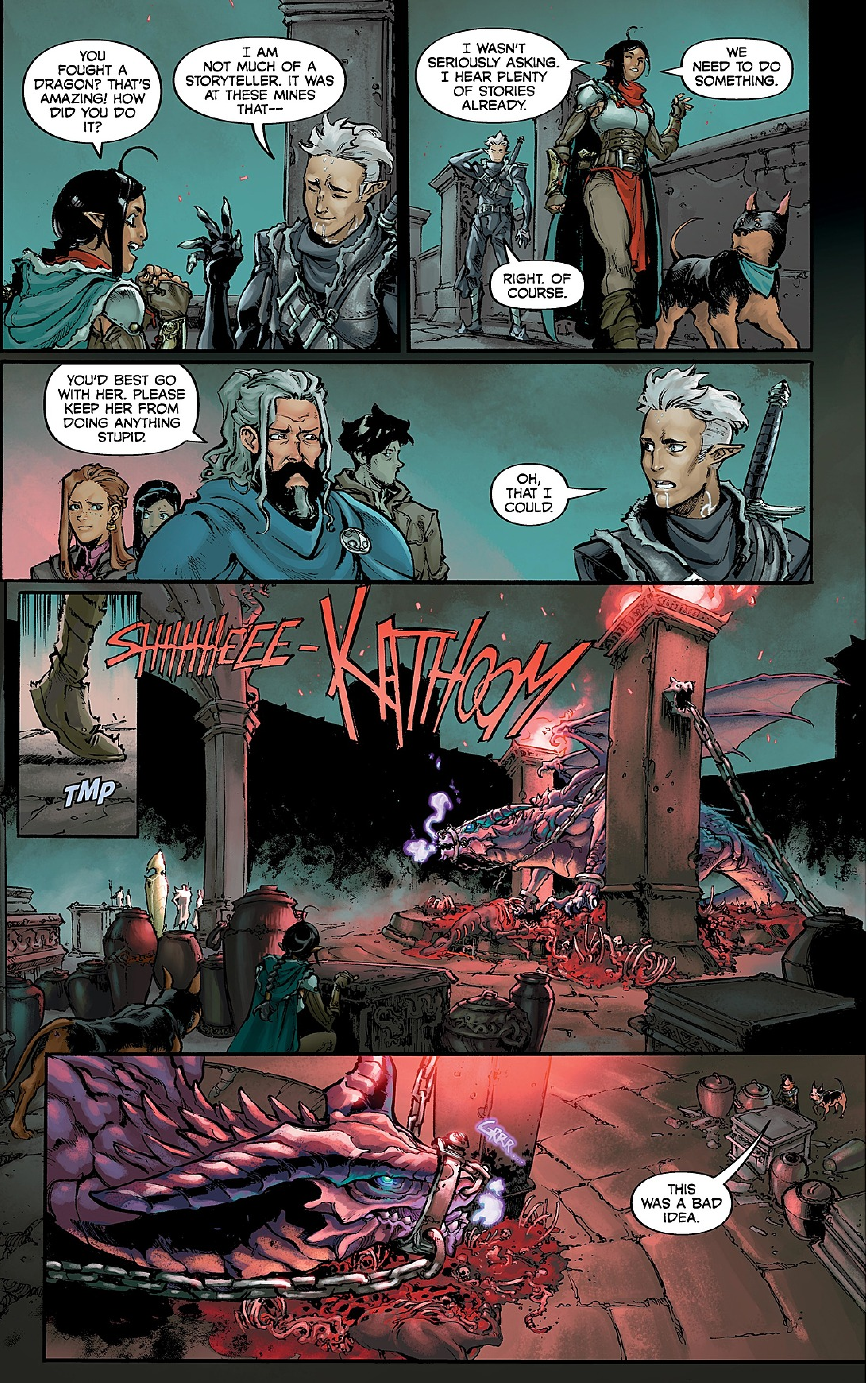

WE THINK THE RITUAL IS IN THE COURTYARD, AND WE'LL WANT TO APPROACH FROM THE ***RAMPARTS*** ABOVE IT.
I WAS LAST HERE ***YEARS*** AGO, AND THIS TUNNEL DIDN'T EXIST THEN. BUT YOU JUST--
LEFT, THEN RIGHT. WATCH FOR A PATROL BEFORE HEADING TO THE LEFTMOST STAIRS.
ALL RIGHT THEN. FOLLOW ME.
ARE YOU READY?
I DON'T THINK I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.
IF FENRIS IS RIGHT, THERE MAY BE A ***LOT*** OF VENATORI MAGES IN THIS COURTYARD.
WE'LL NEED ALL THE FIREPOWER...
...WE... CAN... GET.

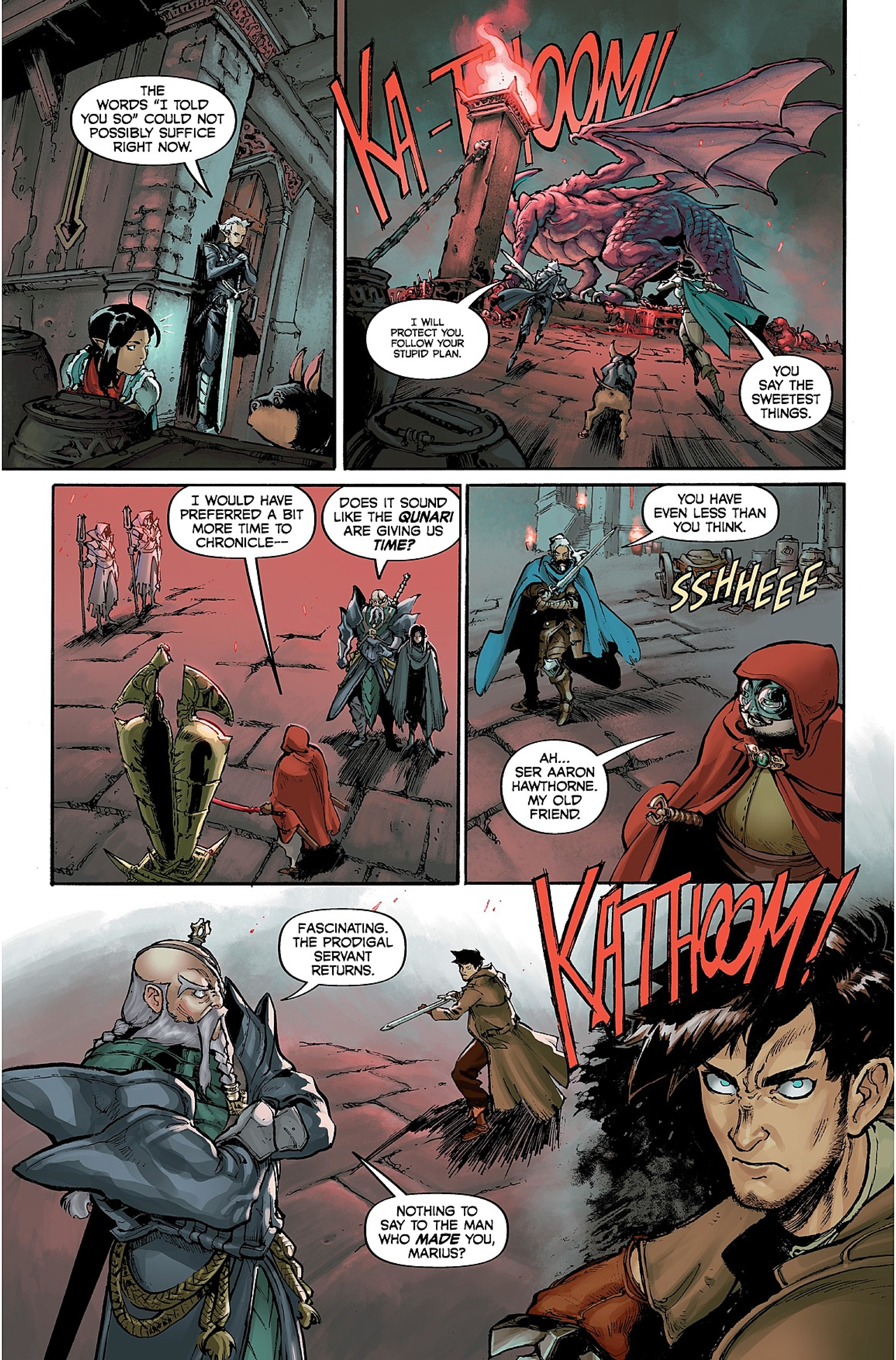

WHAT'S THE SITUATION--?
WELL, SHIT.
IS IT TOO LATE TO THINK OF A PLAN B?

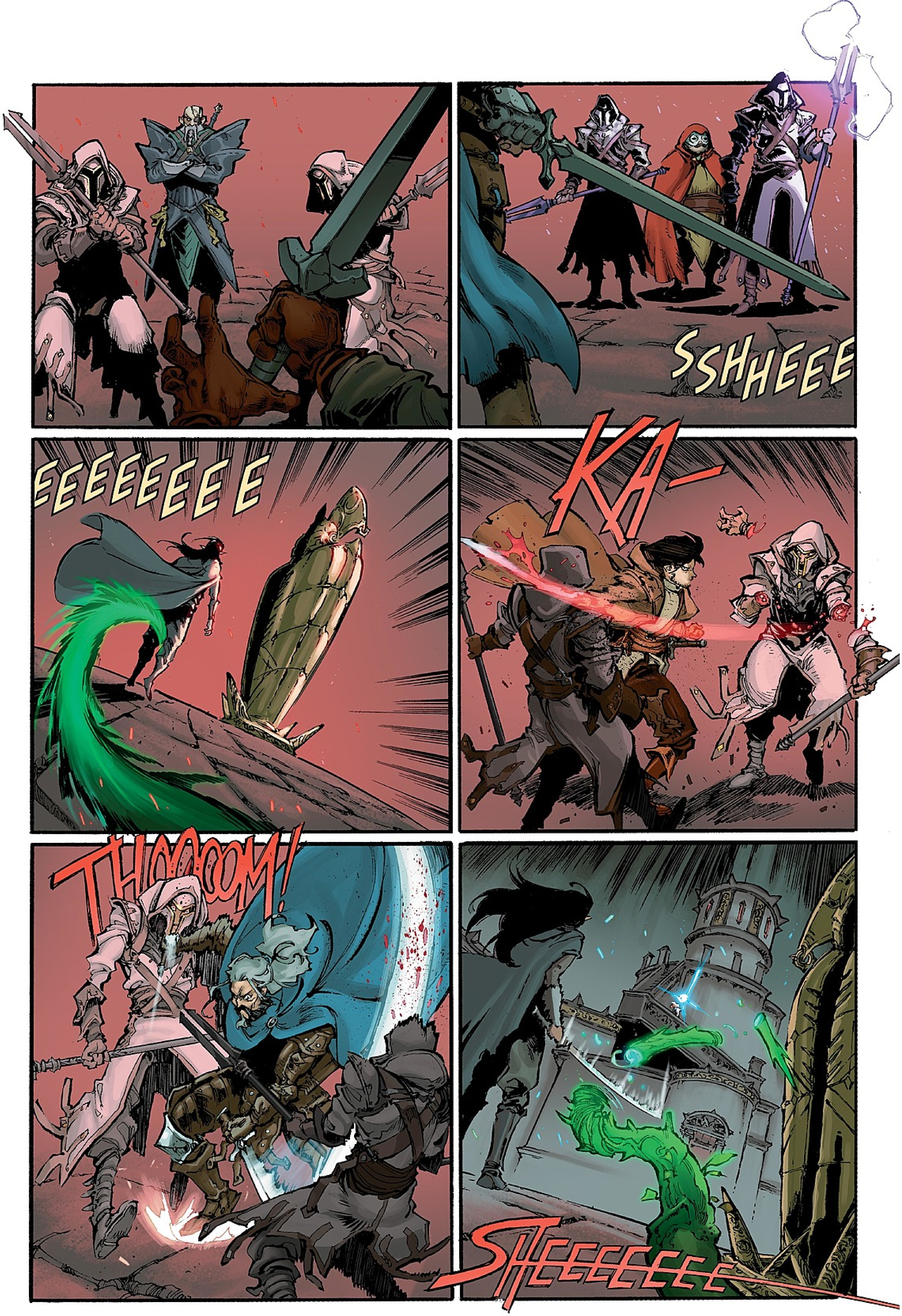

IMPRESSIVE WEAPON, *NON?*
THE IDOL DID EXCELLENT WORK. BUT WILL IT BE ENOUGH TO INFUSE SHIRALLAS?
MORE THAN ENOUGH. UNLIKE THE LYRIUM-INFUSED SWORDS OF THE SO-CALLED ARCANE WARRIORS, THIS SWORD SHOULD SURVIVE THE RITUAL.
PERHAPS IF WE USED THE IDOL--
OUR DEAL WAS THAT I COULD STUDY IT WHEN THIS EXPERIMENT WAS OVER...
...AND YOUR MAN IS DOING WHATEVER IT IS YOU INTEND FOR HIM TO DO WITH THIS POWER.
CAREFUL. THEY MAY HEAR YOU.
I'M ALWAYS CAREFUL. AND THEY WON'T. BUT WE NEED TO HEAR *THEM.*
SSSHHHEEEEE
WHAT IS THAT SOUND...?
NO.
SSSHHEEEEE

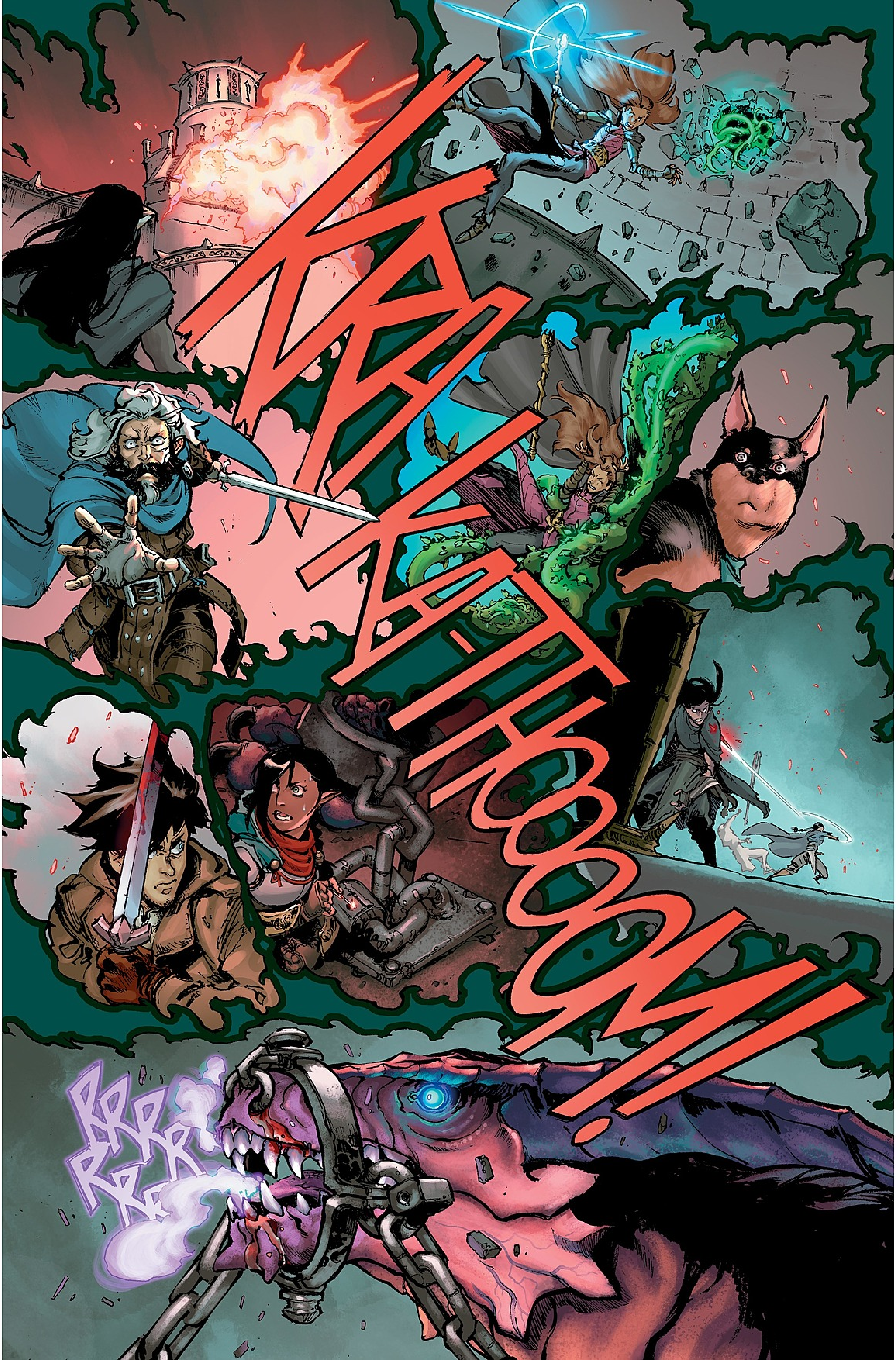

SSHEEE
SHEEE
"THE QUNARI ARE *HERE.*"
KATHOOM!
‹KARASTEN, THE GATES STILL HOLD.›
‹THEY WON'T LAST LONG.›
‹AGAIN.›
SHHEEEE
KOOM
KA-
THOOM!

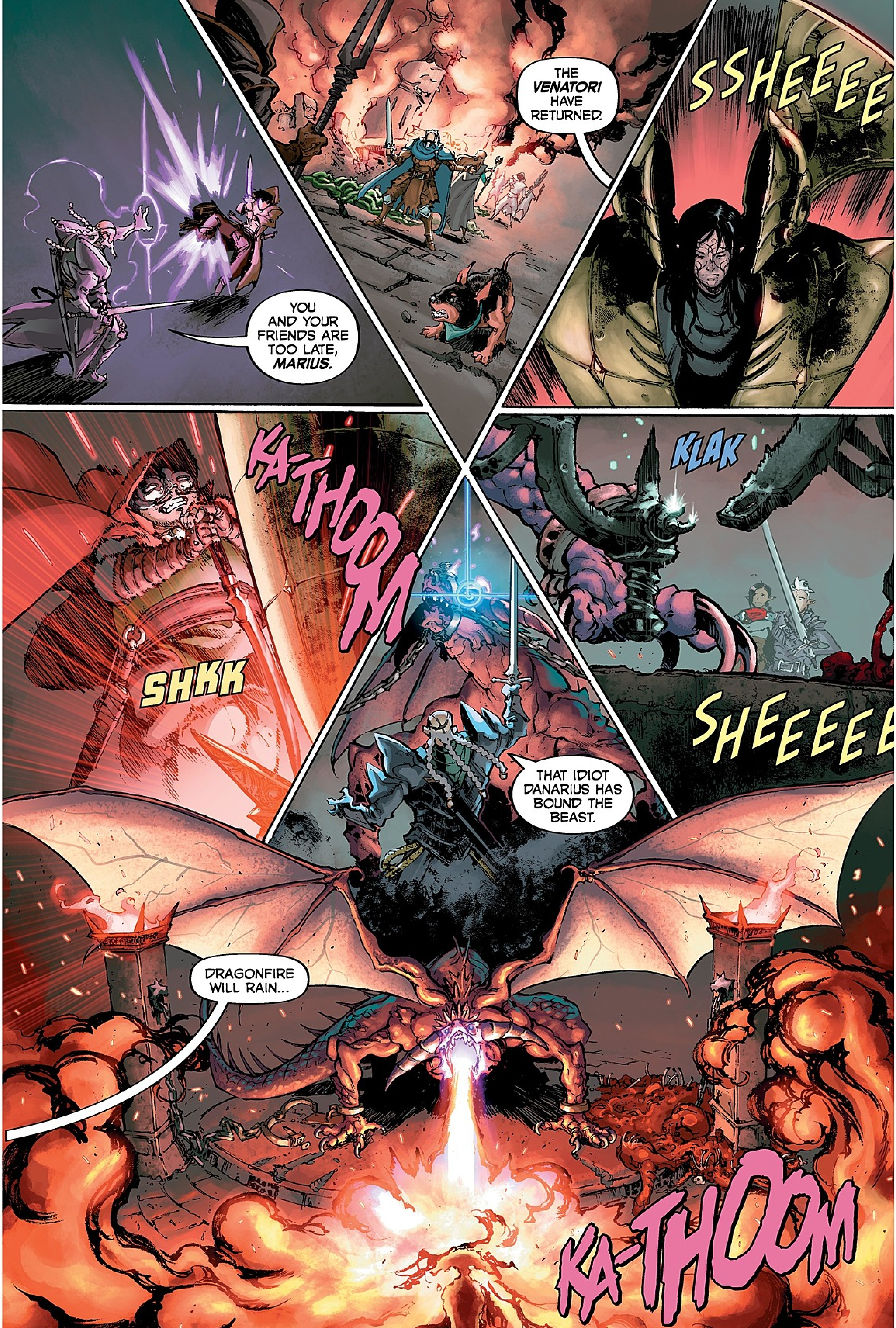

KA-THOOM
LET US *HOPE* THIS CASTELLUM IS AS SECURE AS DANARIUS BOASTED.
WE DO THIS NOW.
YES, MY MASTER.
THE CASTELLUM'S UNDER SIEGE.
YOU THINK SO?
SO THEY'RE STARTING THIS RITUAL NOW.
SHHHHEEEE-KATHOOM
THE REST OF YOU SHOULD STOP THE VENATORI. I'M GOING TO FREE THE DRAGON WHILE ITS MOUTH IS STILL LOCKED SHUT.
YOU? FIGHT A *DRAGON?*
NOT FIGHT. *FREE.*
YES, WHICH WILL LEAD TO A FIGHT. WHICH YOU WILL LOSE, MUZZLE OR NO.
GEE, THANKS.
I'M NOT INSULTING YOU. IT IS A FACT. WHICH OF US HAS FOUGHT A DRAGON?

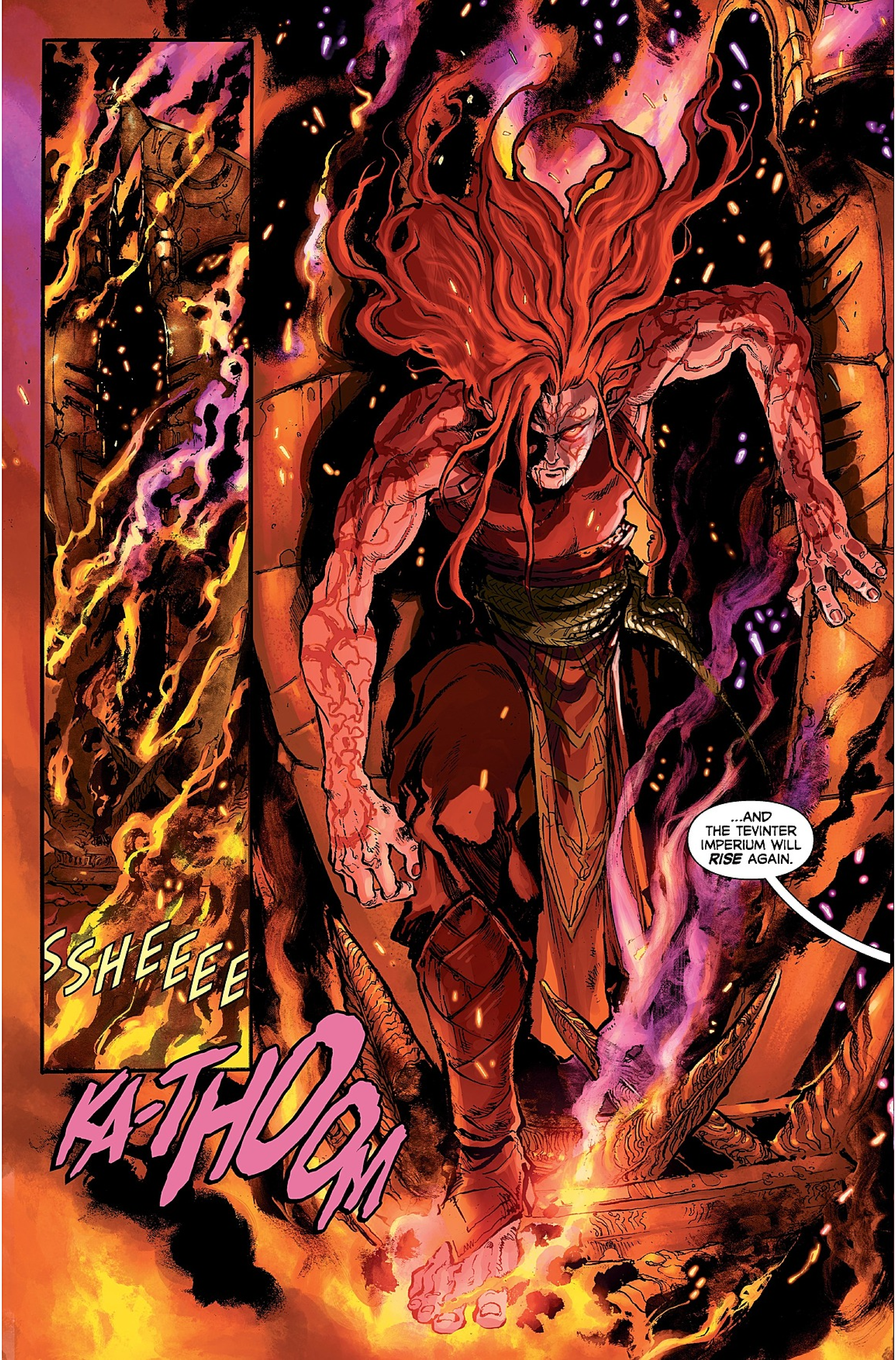

YOU FOUGHT A DRAGON? THAT'S AMAZING! HOW DID YOU DO IT?
I AM NOT MUCH OF A STORYTELLER. IT WAS AT THESE MINES THAT--
I WASN'T SERIOUSLY ASKING. I HEAR PLENTY OF STORIES ALREADY.
WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING.
RIGHT. OF COURSE.
YOU'D BEST GO WITH HER. PLEASE KEEP HER FROM DOING ANYTHING STUPID.
OH, THAT I COULD.
TMP
SHHHHHEEEE-KATHOOM
GRRR...
THIS WAS A BAD IDEA.

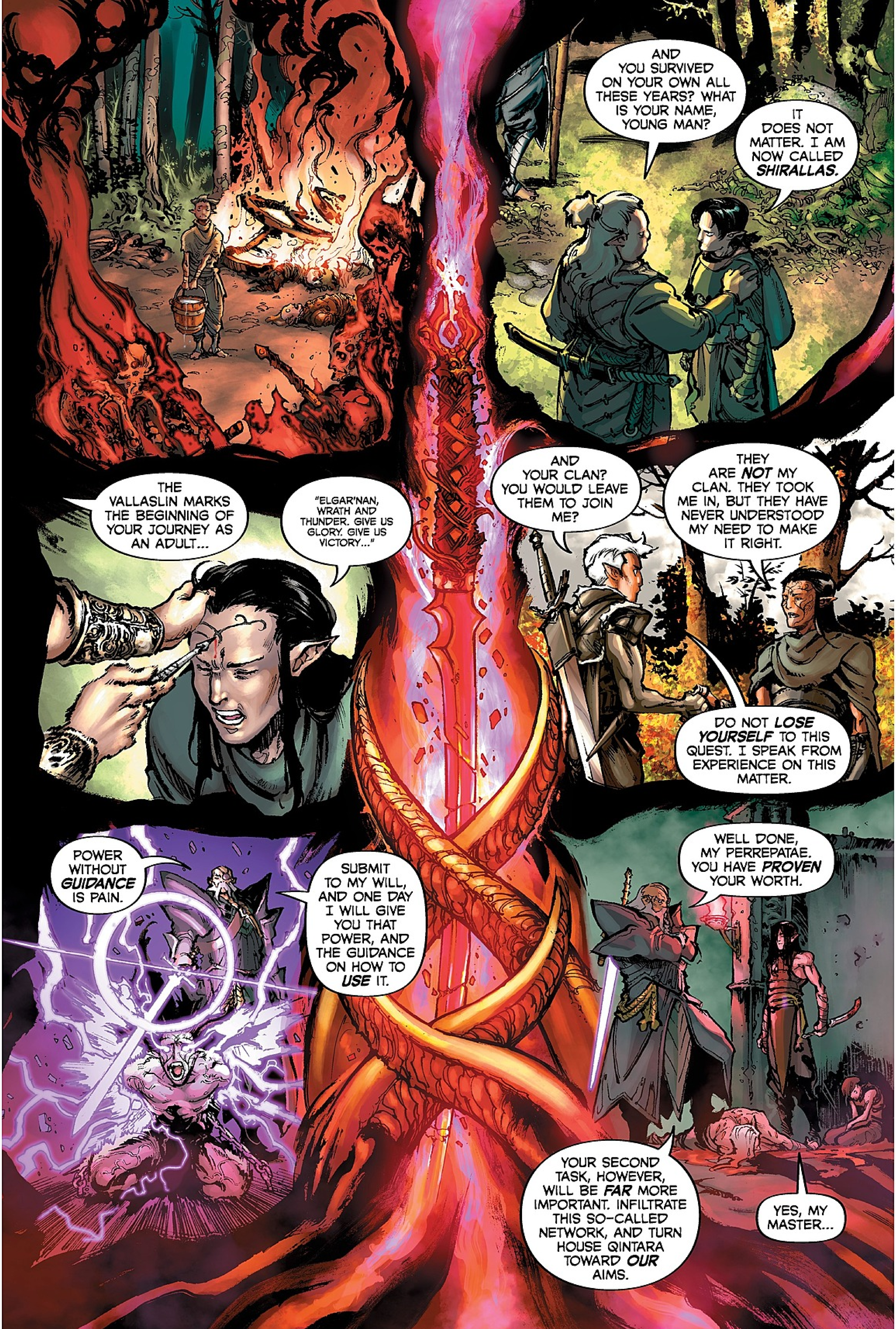

THE WORDS "I TOLD YOU SO" COULD NOT POSSIBLY SUFFICE RIGHT NOW.
KA-THOOM!
I WILL PROTECT YOU. FOLLOW YOUR STUPID PLAN.
YOU SAY THE SWEETEST THINGS.
I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A BIT MORE TIME TO CHRONICLE--
DOES IT SOUND LIKE THE *QUNARI* ARE GIVING US *TIME?*
YOU HAVE EVEN LESS THAN YOU THINK.
SSHHEEE
AH... SER AARON HAWTHORNE. MY OLD FRIEND.
KATHOOM!
FASCINATING. THE PRODIGAL SERVANT RETURNS.
NOTHING TO SAY TO THE MAN WHO *MADE* YOU, MARIUS?

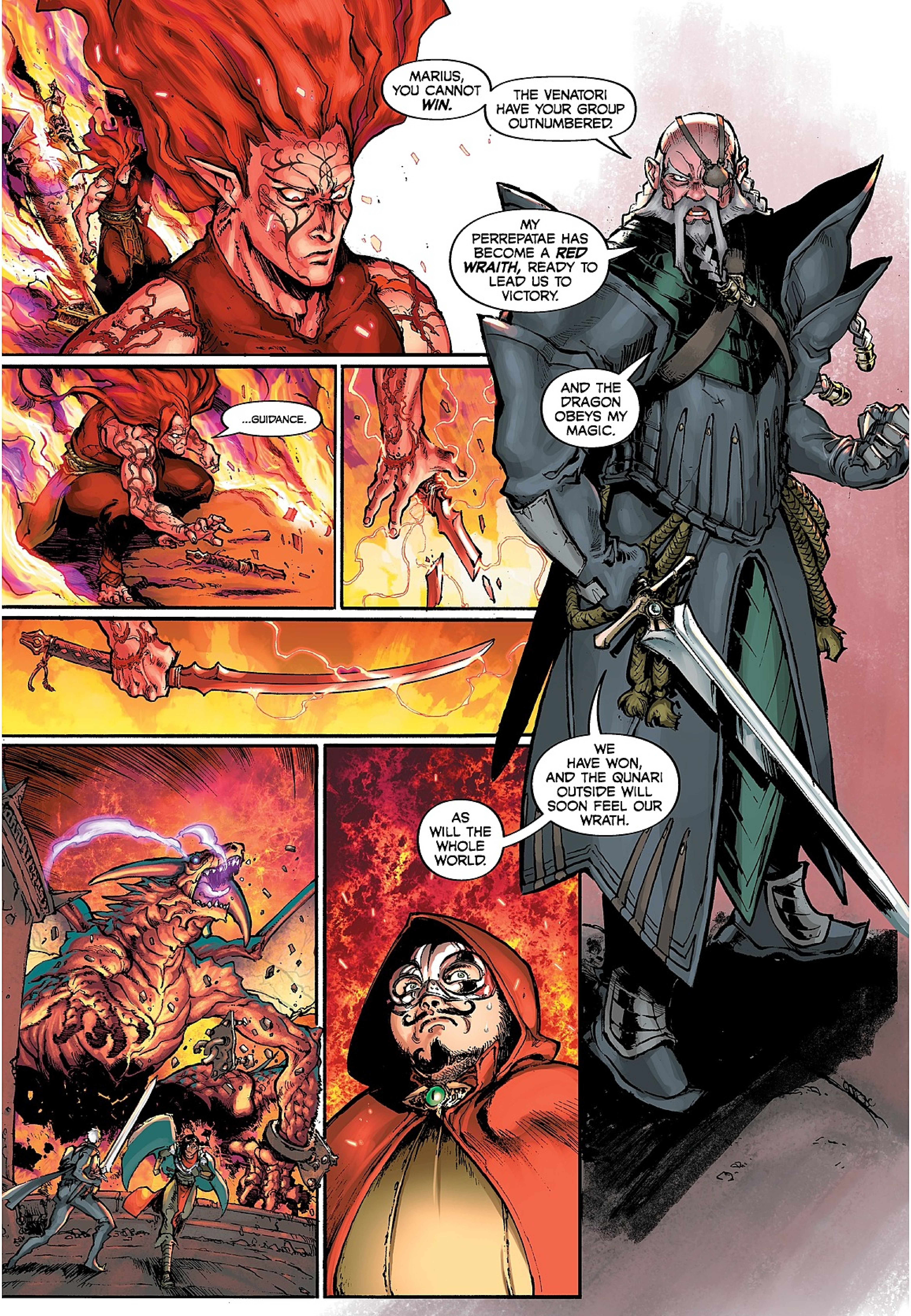

SSHHEEE
EEEEEEEEE
KA-
THOOOOOM!
SHEEEEEEEE

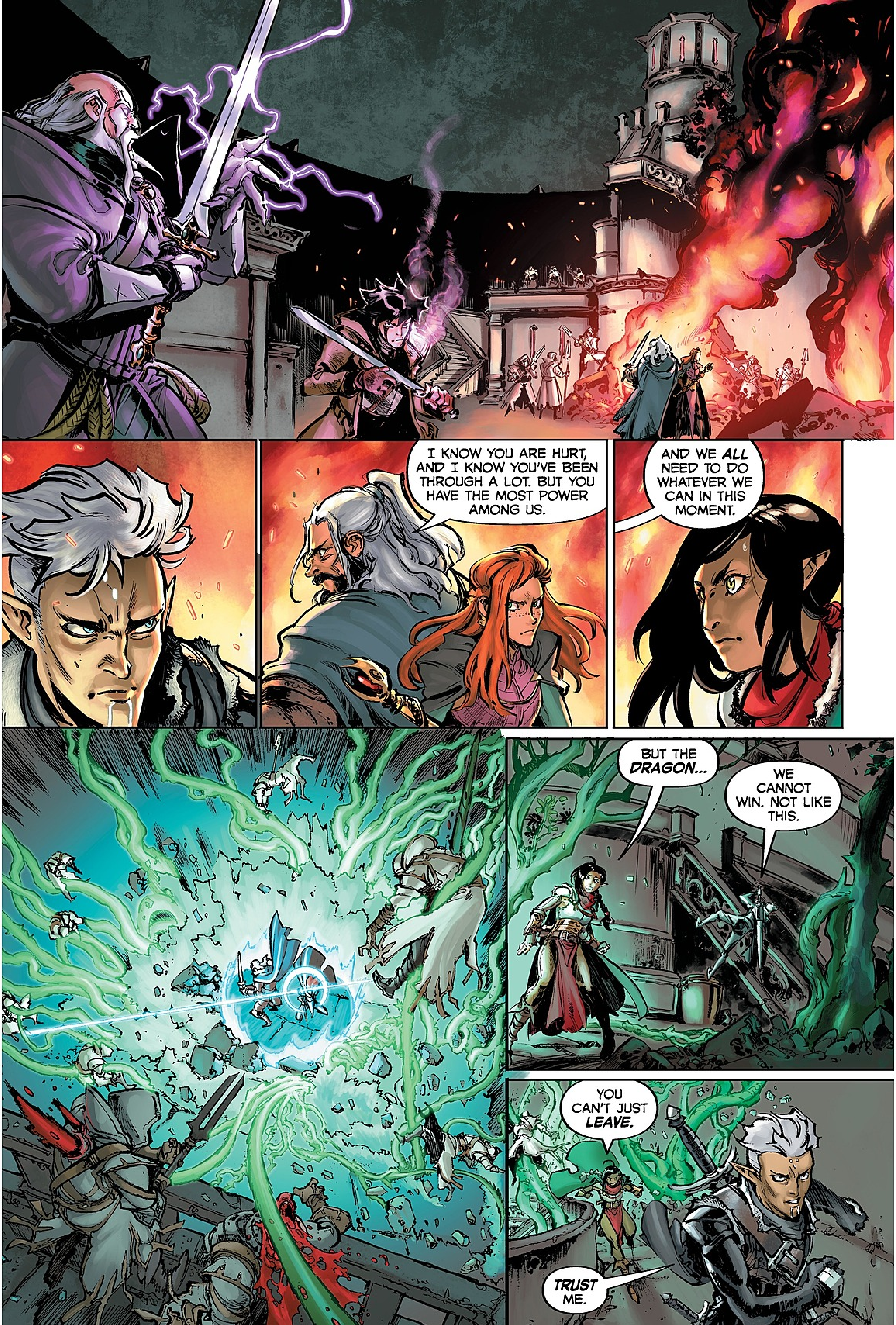

KRAKA-THOOOM!!
RRR
RRR
RR

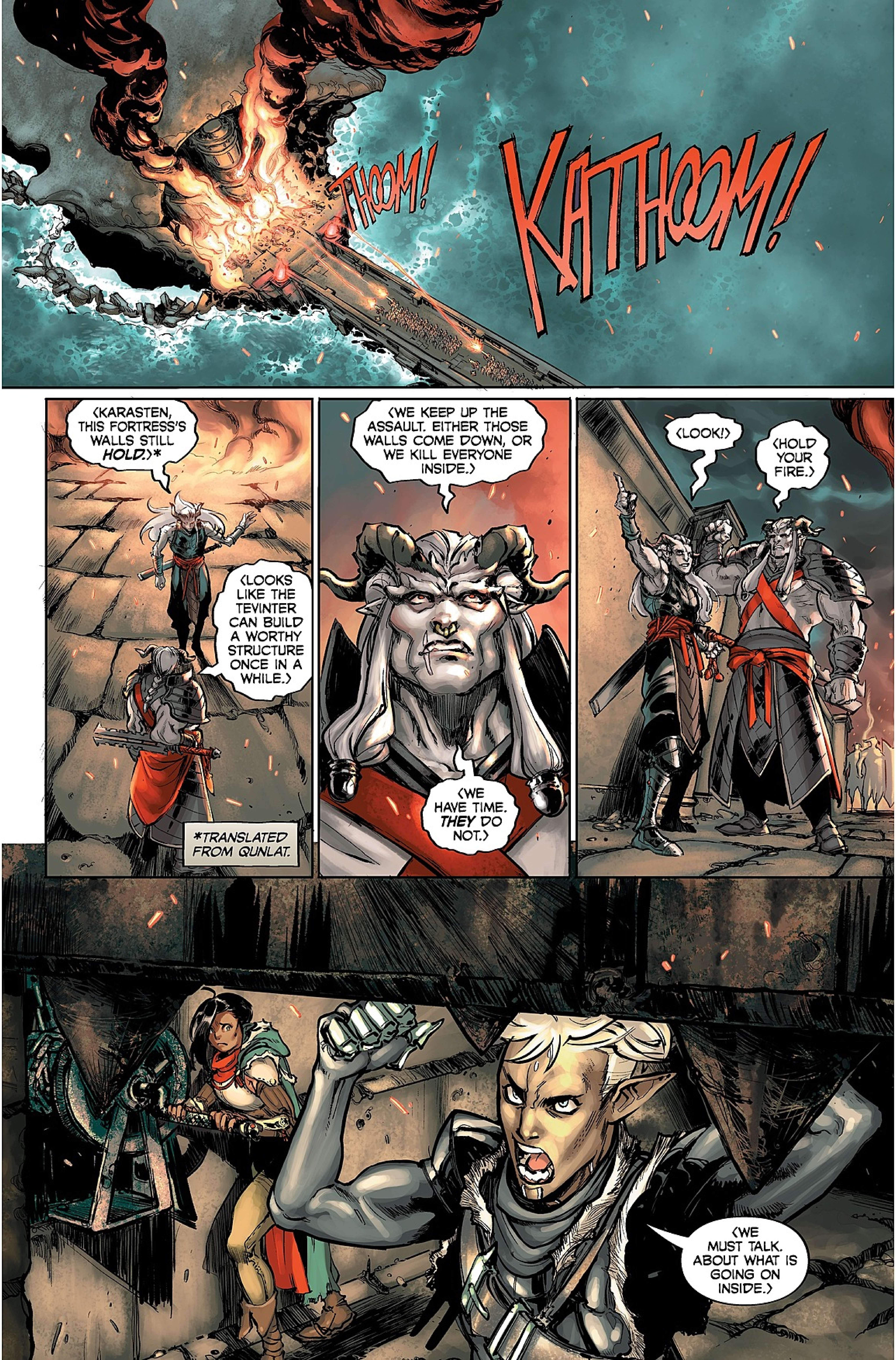

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE TOO LATE, *MARIUS.*
THE *VENATORI* HAVE RETURNED.
SSHEEEE
KA-THOOM
SHKK
KLAK
SHEEEEE
THAT IDIOT DANARIUS HAS BOUND THE BEAST.
DRAGONFIRE WILL RAIN...
KA-THOOM

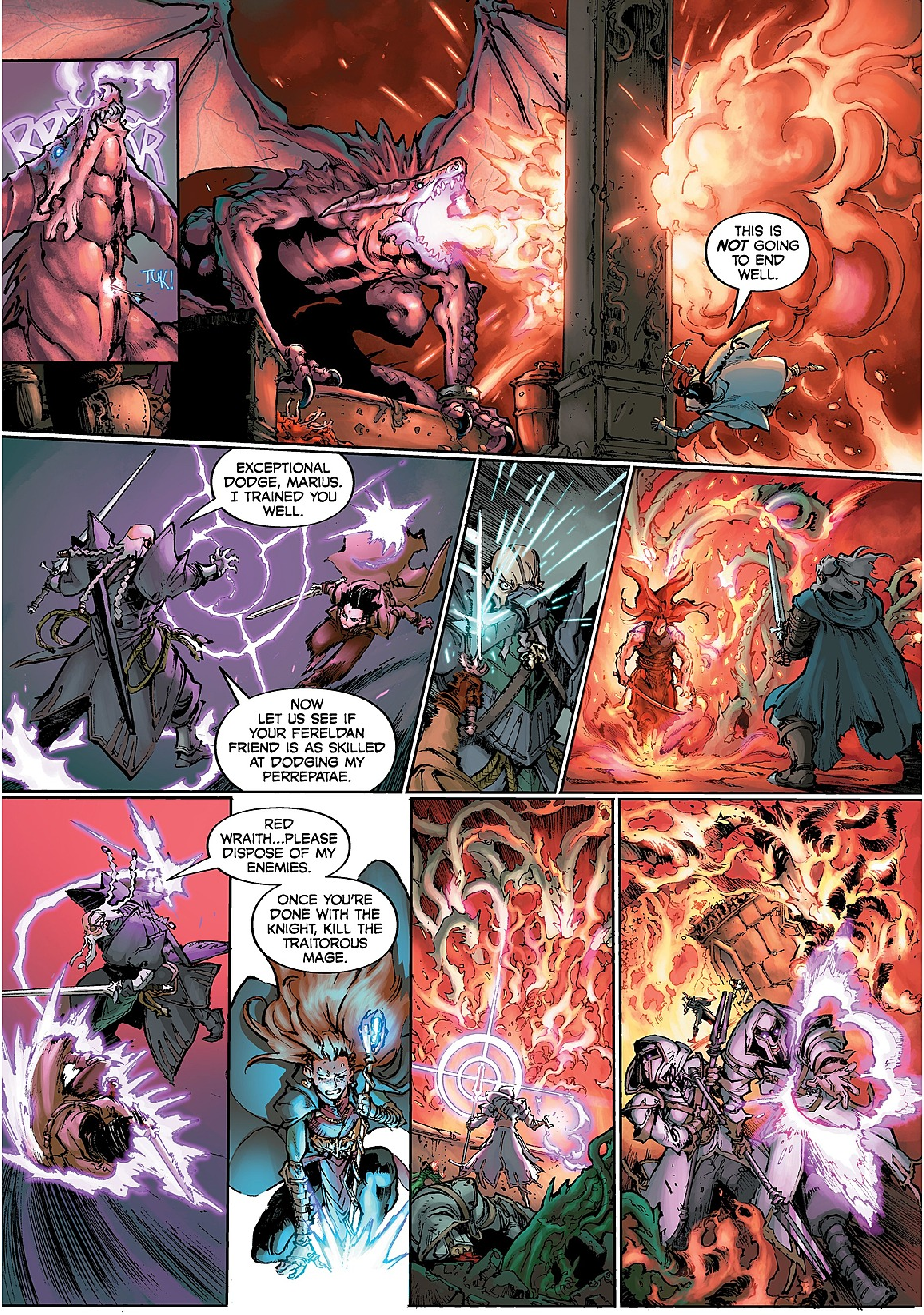

SSHEEEEE
KA-THOOM
...AND THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM WILL *RISE* AGAIN.

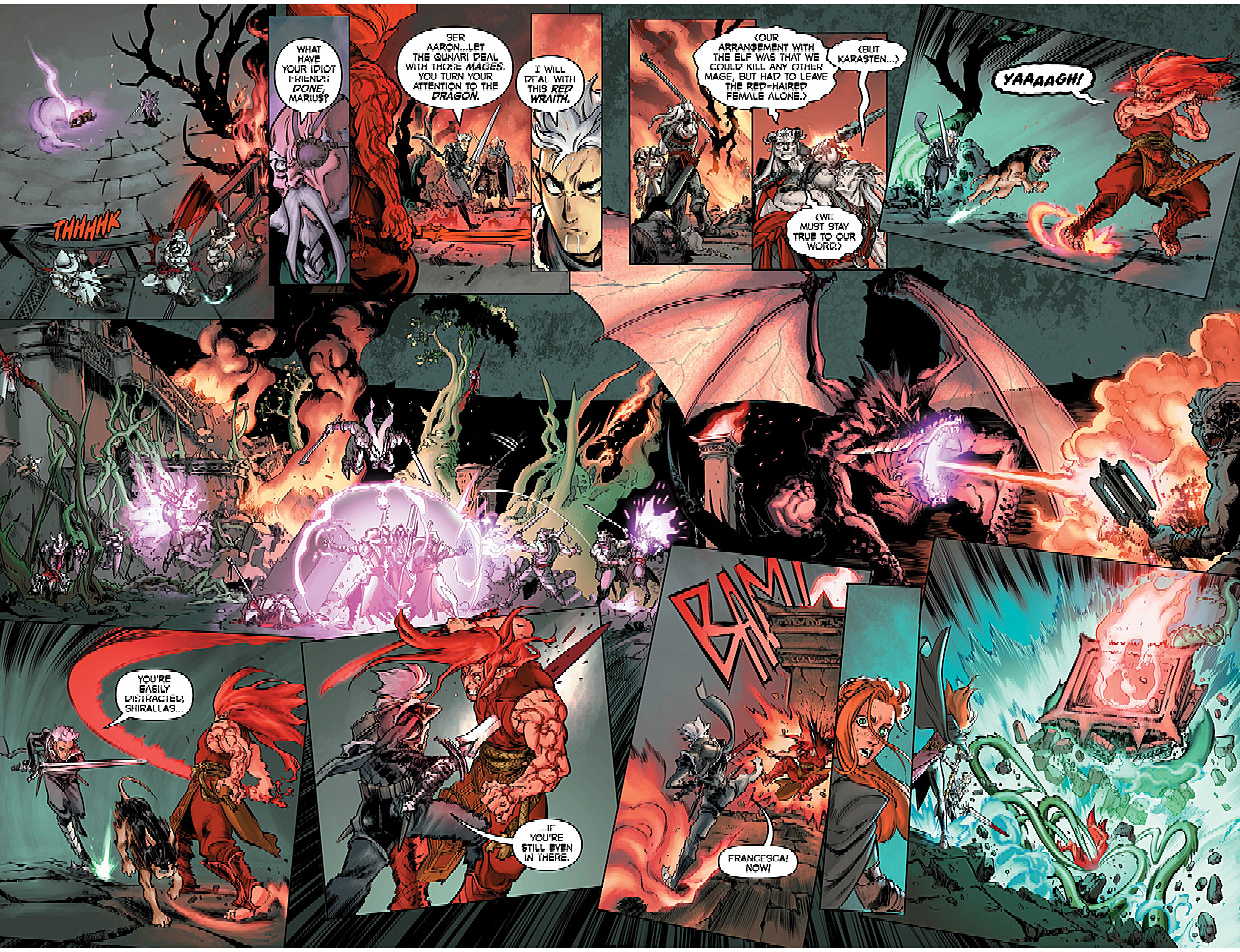

AND YOU SURVIVED ON YOUR OWN ALL THESE YEARS? WHAT IS YOUR NAME, YOUNG MAN?
IT DOES NOT MATTER. I AM NOW CALLED ***SHIRALLAS.***
THE VALLASLIN MARKS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR JOURNEY AS AN ADULT...
"ELGAR'NAN, WRATH AND THUNDER. GIVE US GLORY. GIVE US VICTORY..."
AND YOUR CLAN? YOU WOULD LEAVE THEM TO JOIN ME?
THEY ARE ***NOT*** MY CLAN. THEY TOOK ME IN, BUT THEY HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD MY NEED TO MAKE IT RIGHT.
DO NOT ***LOSE YOURSELF*** TO THIS QUEST. I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE ON THIS MATTER.
POWER WITHOUT ***GUIDANCE*** IS PAIN.
SUBMIT TO MY WILL, AND ONE DAY I WILL GIVE YOU THAT POWER, AND THE GUIDANCE ON HOW TO ***USE*** IT.
WELL DONE, MY PERREPATAE. YOU HAVE ***PROVEN*** YOUR WORTH.
YOUR SECOND TASK, HOWEVER, WILL BE ***FAR*** MORE IMPORTANT. INFILTRATE THIS SO-CALLED NETWORK, AND TURN HOUSE QINTARA TOWARD ***OUR*** AIMS.
YES, MY MASTER...

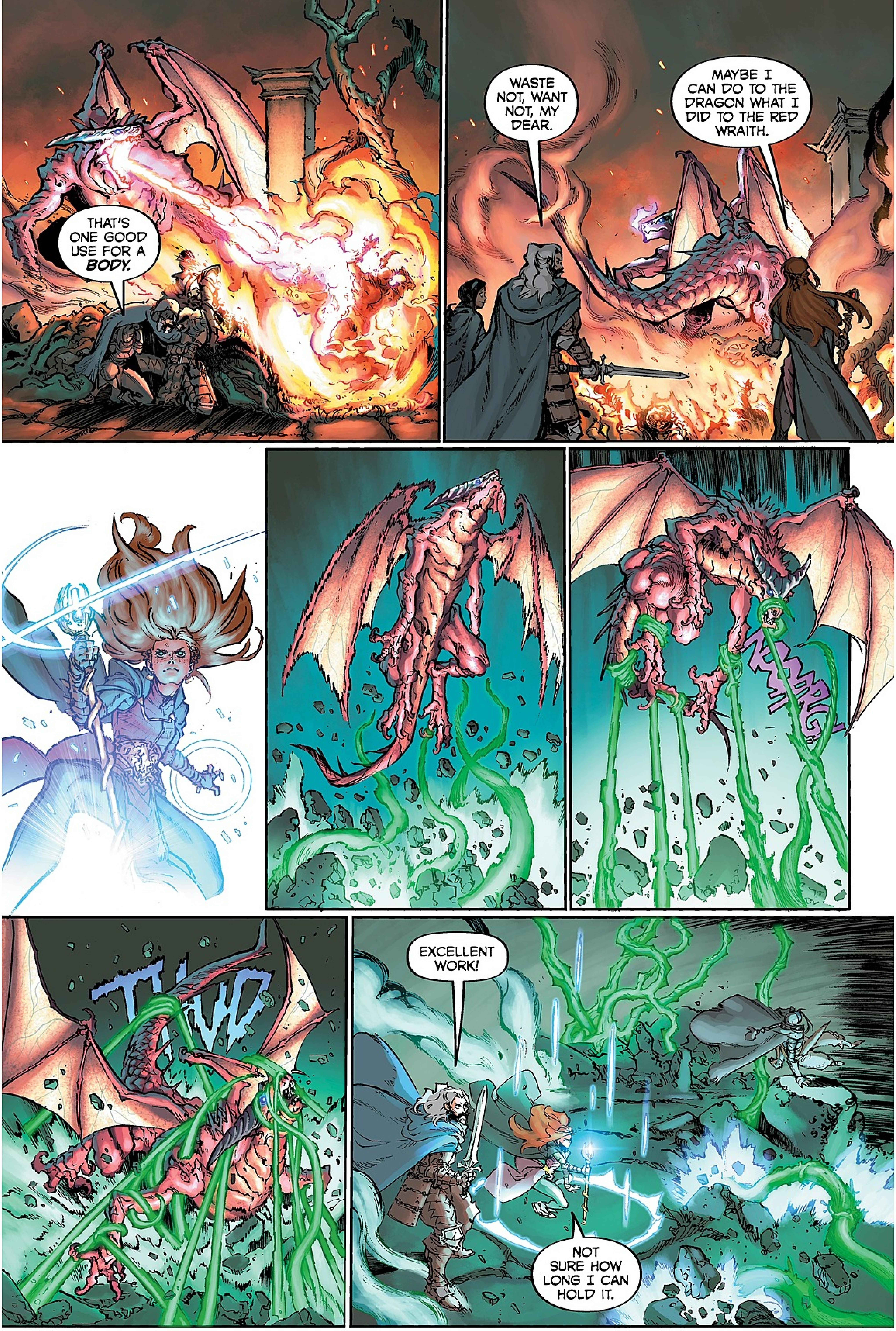

MARIUS, YOU CANNOT *WIN.*
THE VENATORI HAVE YOUR GROUP OUTNUMBERED.
MY PERREPATAE HAS BECOME A *RED WRAITH,* READY TO LEAD US TO VICTORY.
AND THE DRAGON OBEYS MY MAGIC.
...GUIDANCE.
WE HAVE WON, AND THE QUNARI OUTSIDE WILL SOON FEEL OUR WRATH.
AS WILL THE WHOLE WORLD.

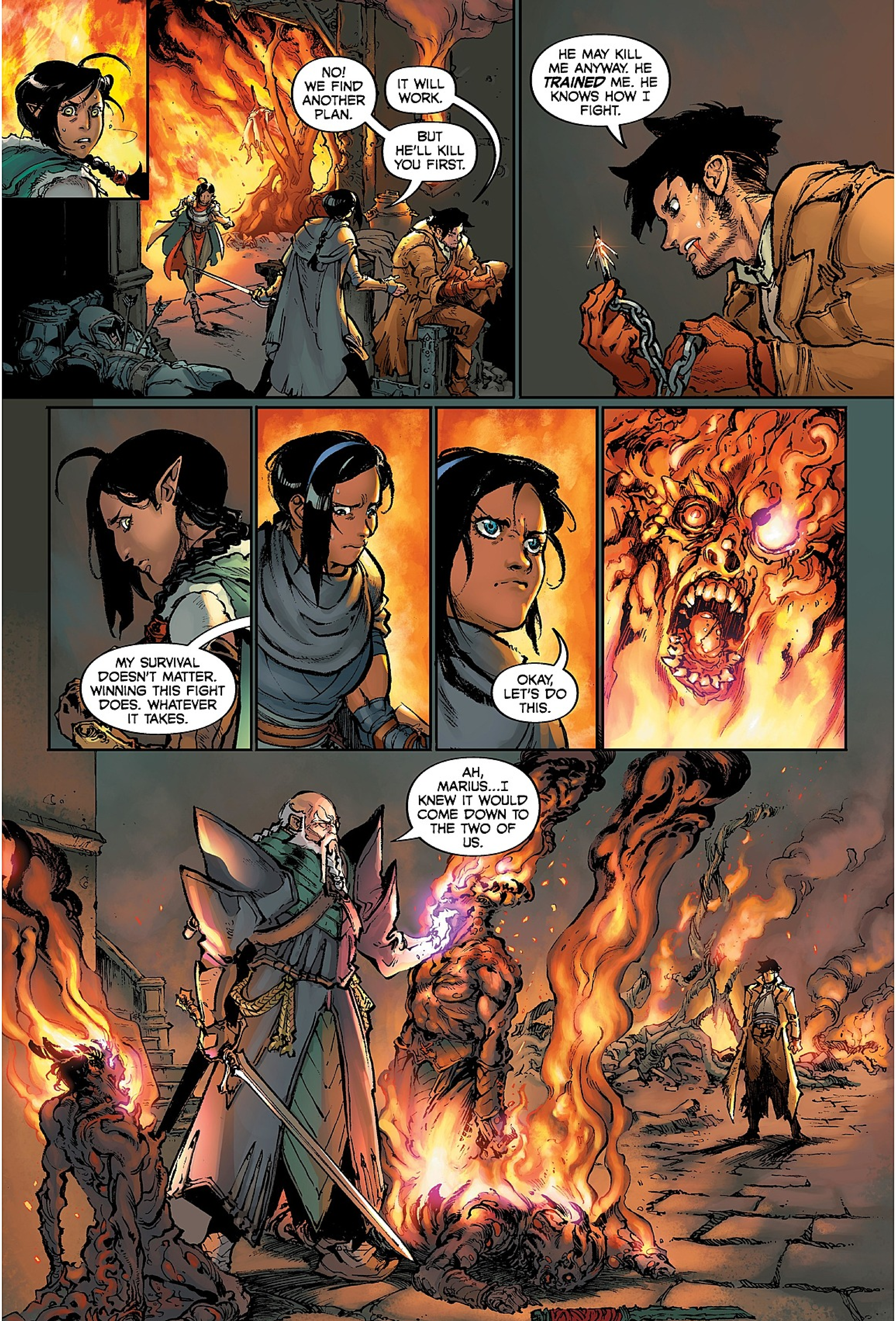

I KNOW YOU ARE HURT, AND I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. BUT YOU HAVE THE MOST POWER AMONG US.
AND WE ***ALL*** NEED TO DO WHATEVER WE CAN IN THIS MOMENT.
BUT THE ***DRAGON...***
WE CANNOT WIN. NOT LIKE THIS.
YOU CAN'T JUST ***LEAVE.***
TRUST ME.

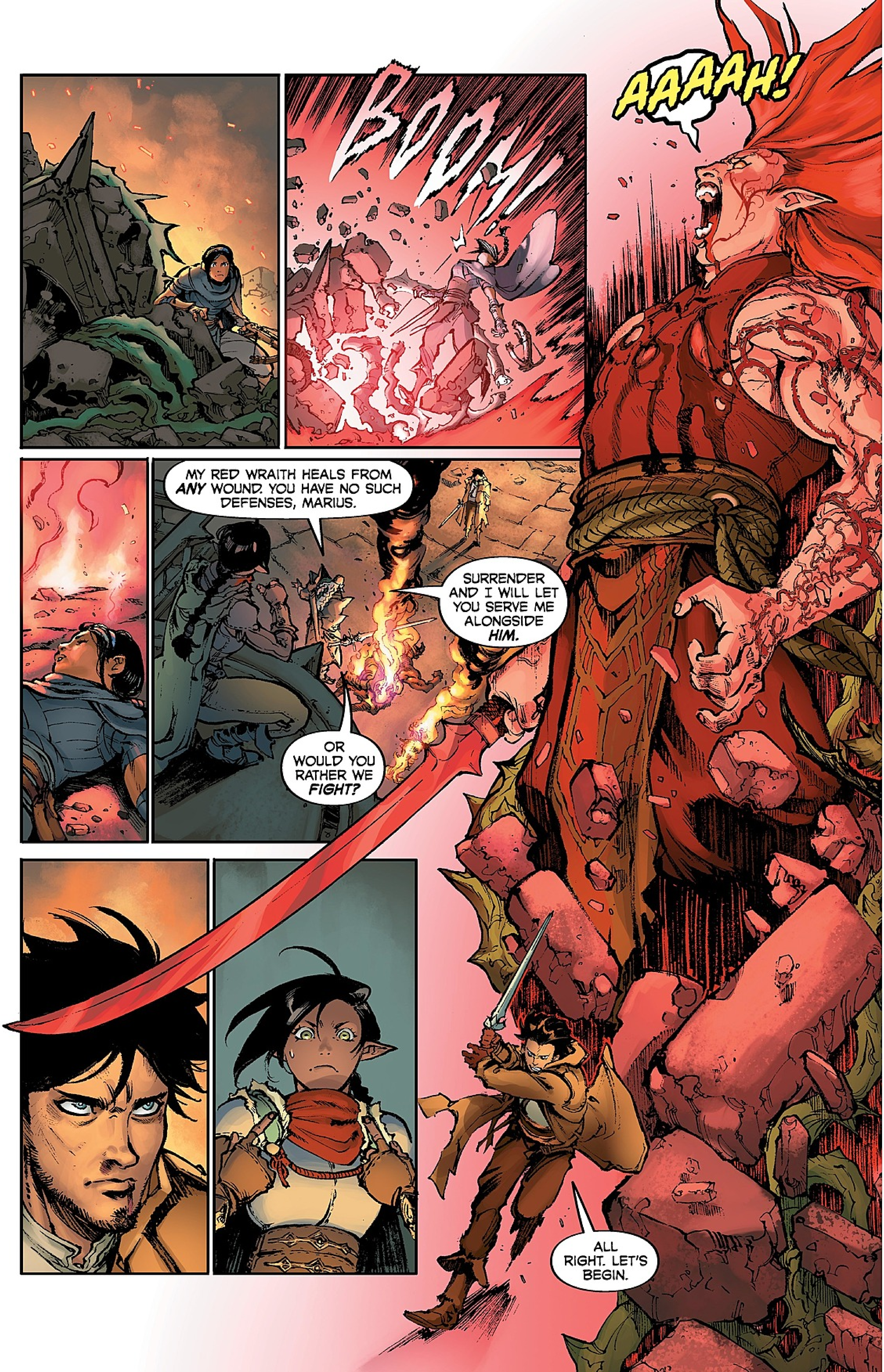

THOOM!
KATHOOM!
‹KARASTEN, THIS FORTRESS'S WALLS STILL *HOLD*.›*
‹LOOKS LIKE THE TEVINTER CAN BUILD A WORTHY STRUCTURE ONCE IN A WHILE.›
*TRANSLATED FROM QUNLAT.
‹WE KEEP UP THE ASSAULT. EITHER THOSE WALLS COME DOWN, OR WE KILL EVERYONE INSIDE.›
‹WE HAVE TIME. *THEY* DO NOT.›
‹LOOK!›
‹HOLD YOUR FIRE.›
‹WE MUST TALK. ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE.›

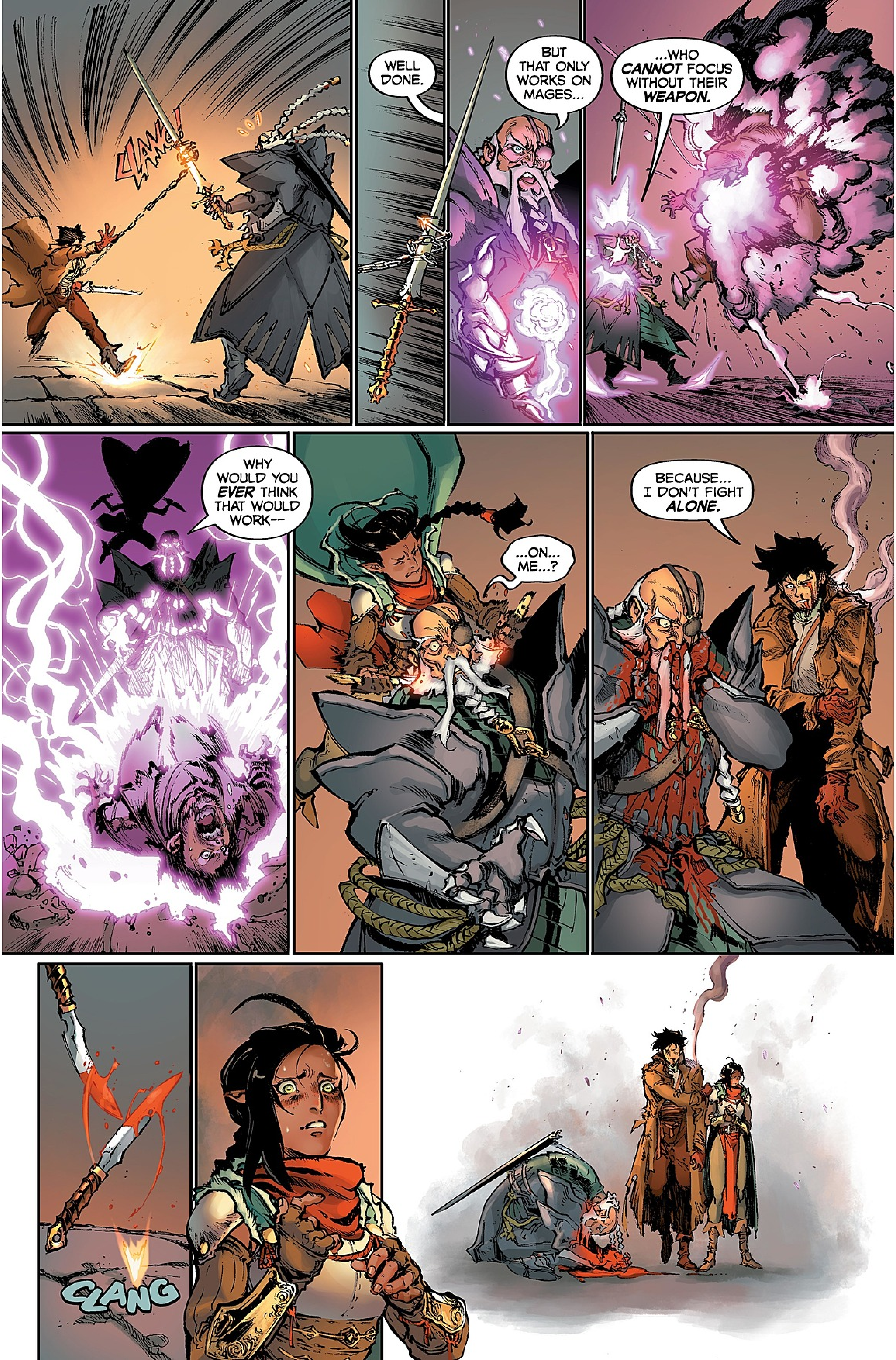

TUK!
THIS IS *NOT* GOING TO END WELL.
EXCEPTIONAL DODGE, MARIUS. I TRAINED YOU WELL.
NOW LET US SEE IF YOUR FERELDAN FRIEND IS AS SKILLED AT DODGING MY PERREPATAE.
RED WRAITH...PLEASE DISPOSE OF MY ENEMIES.
ONCE YOU'RE DONE WITH THE KNIGHT, KILL THE TRAITOROUS MAGE.

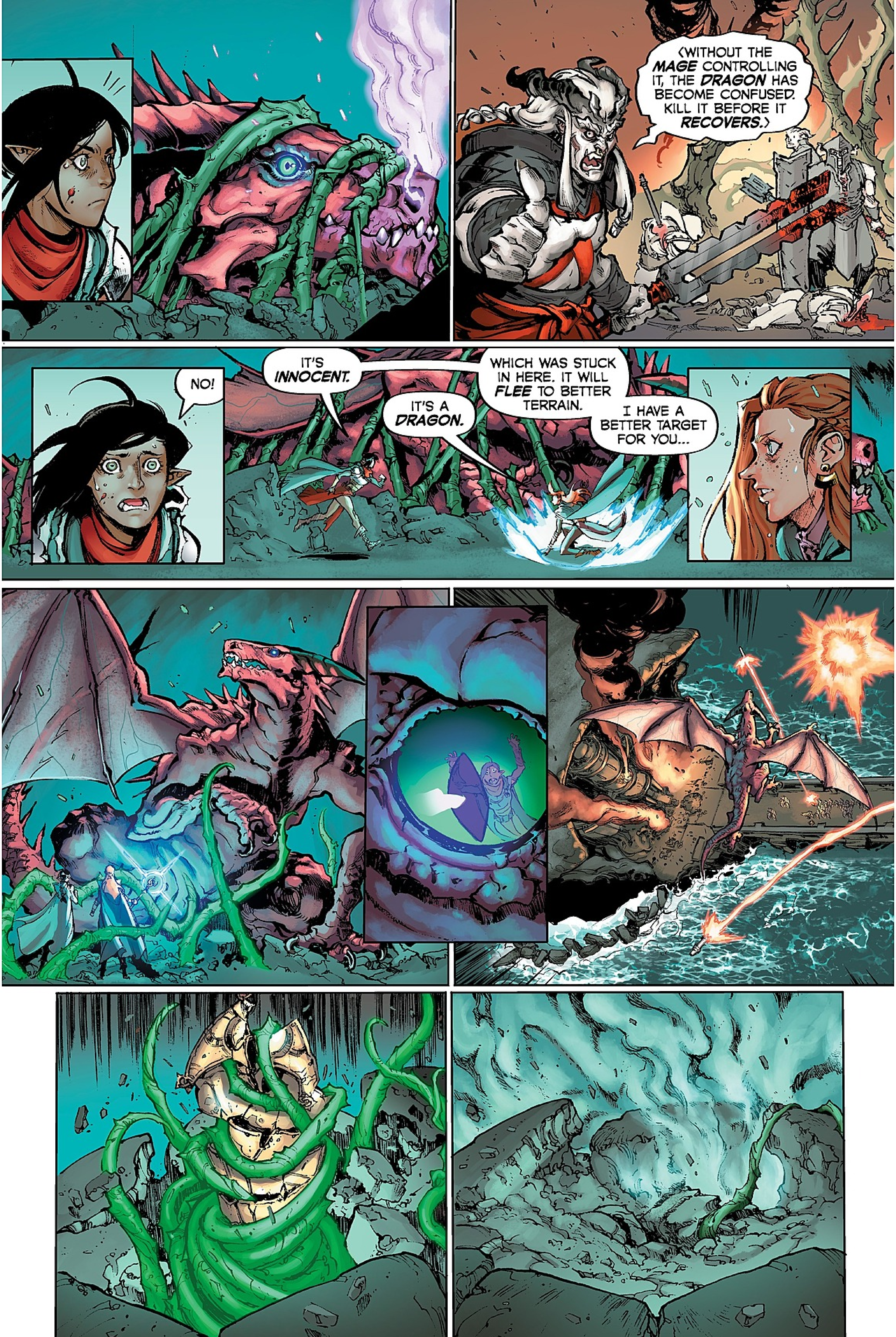

THHHHK
WHAT HAVE YOUR IDIOT FRIENDS *DONE,* MARIUS?
SER AARON...LET THE QUNARI DEAL WITH THOSE *MAGES.* YOU TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO THE *DRAGON.*
I WILL DEAL WITH THIS *RED WRAITH.*
‹OUR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE ELF WAS THAT WE COULD KILL ANY OTHER MAGE, BUT HAD TO LEAVE THE RED-HAIRED FEMALE ALONE.›
‹BUT KARASTEN...›
‹WE MUST STAY TRUE TO OUR WORD.›
YAAAAGH!
YOU'RE EASILY DISTRACTED, SHIRALLAS...
...IF YOU'RE STILL EVEN IN THERE.
BAM
FRANCESCA! NOW!

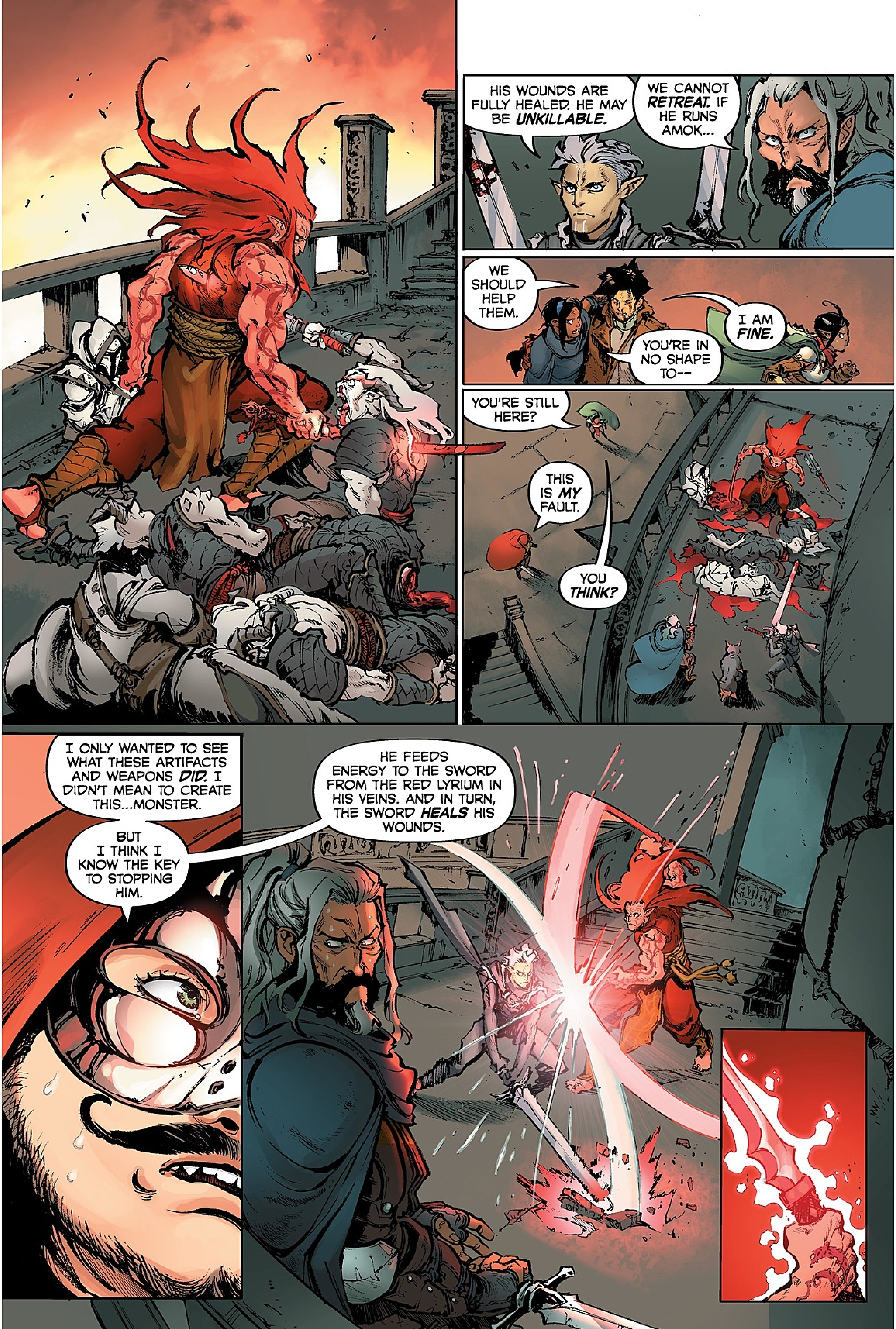

THAT'S ONE GOOD USE FOR A *BODY.*
WASTE NOT, WANT NOT, MY DEAR.
MAYBE I CAN DO TO THE DRAGON WHAT I DID TO THE RED WRAITH.
NNNARG!
THUD
EXCELLENT WORK!
NOT SURE HOW LONG I CAN HOLD IT.

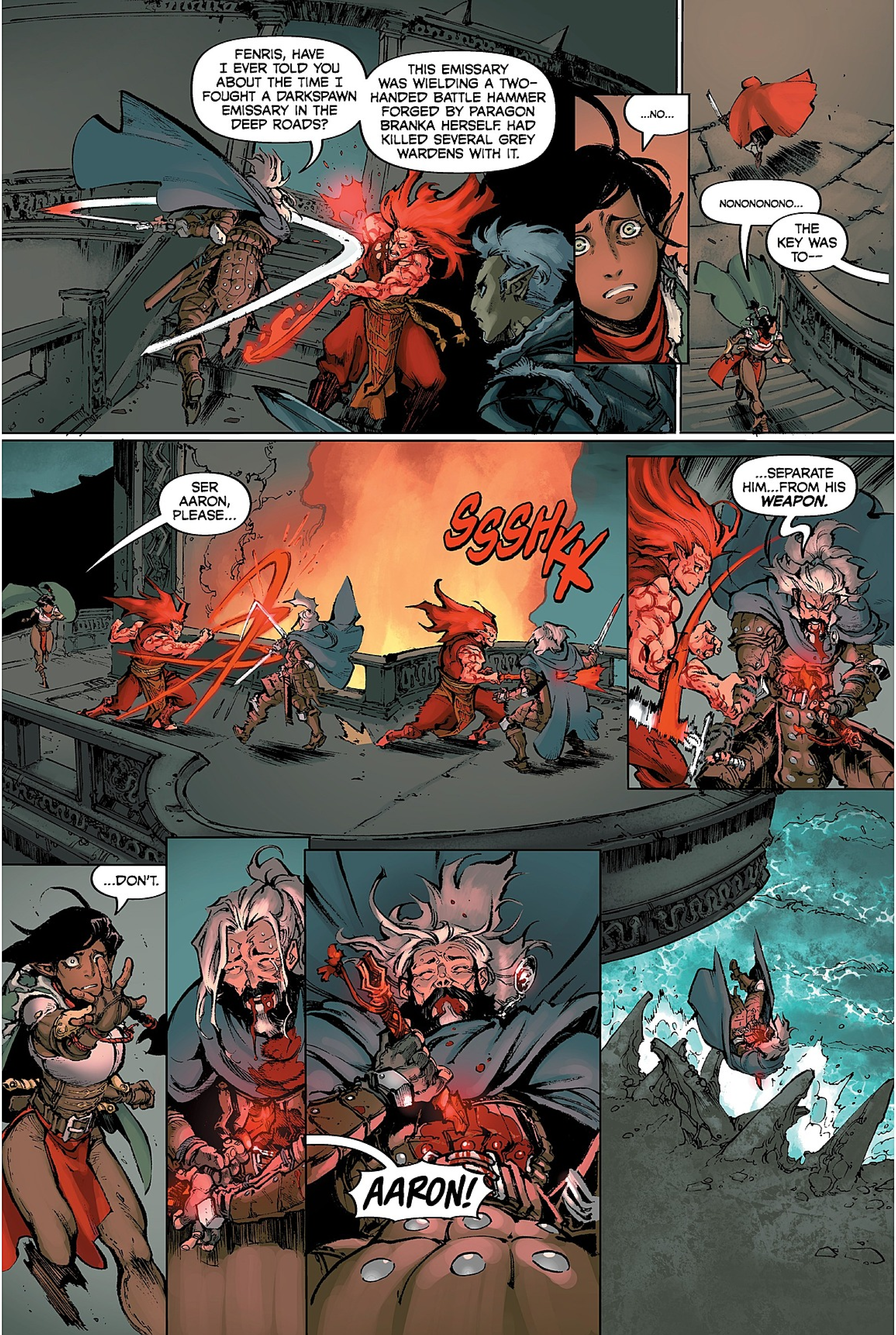

NO! WE FIND ANOTHER PLAN.
IT WILL WORK.
BUT HE'LL KILL YOU FIRST.
HE MAY KILL ME ANYWAY. HE *TRAINED* ME. HE KNOWS HOW I FIGHT.
MY SURVIVAL DOESN'T MATTER. WINNING THIS FIGHT DOES. WHATEVER IT TAKES.
OKAY, LET'S DO THIS.
AH, MARIUS...I KNEW IT WOULD COME DOWN TO THE TWO OF US.

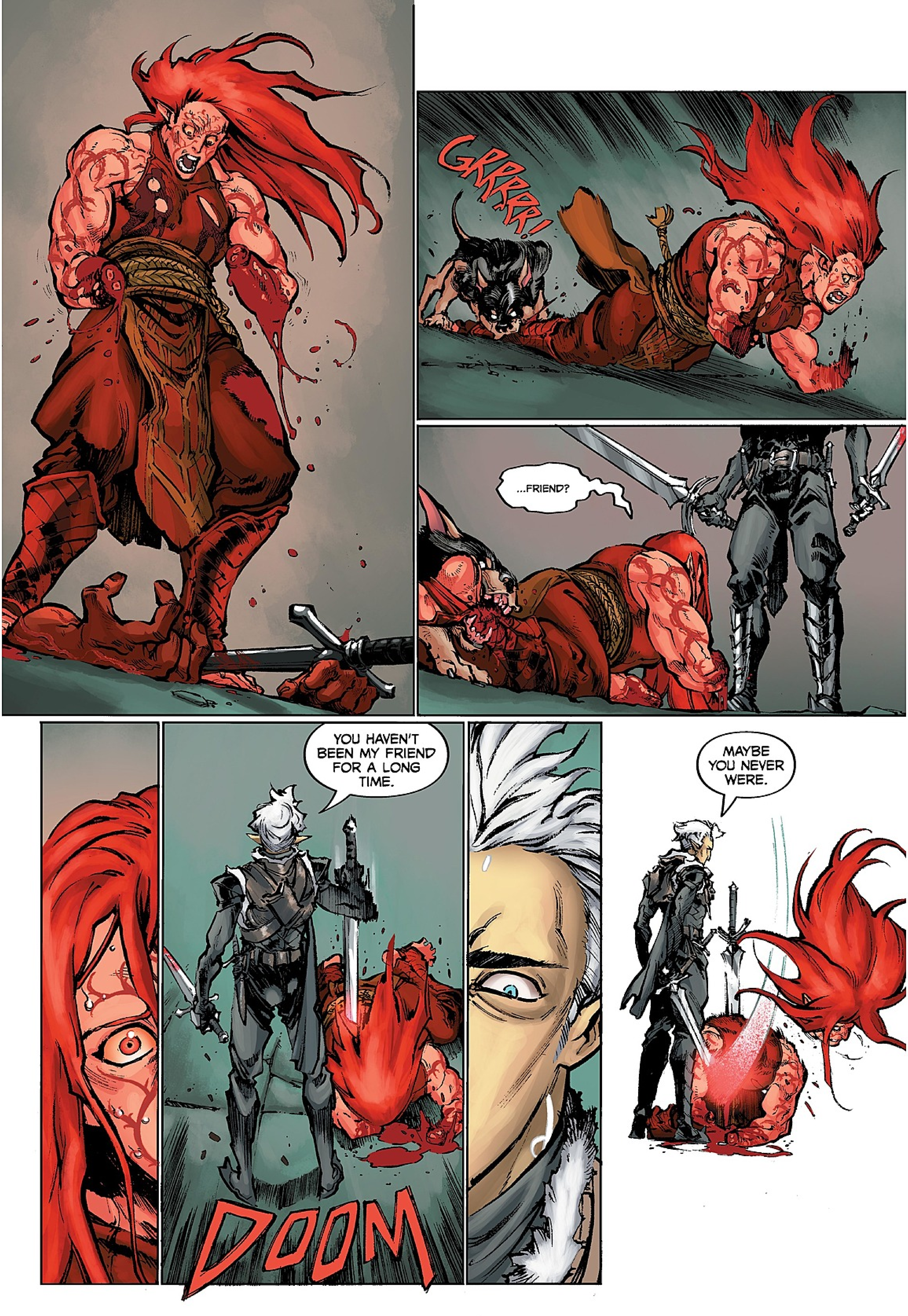

BOOM!
AAAAH!
MY RED WRAITH HEALS FROM *ANY* WOUND. YOU HAVE NO SUCH DEFENSES, MARIUS.
SURRENDER AND I WILL LET YOU SERVE ME ALONGSIDE *HIM.*
OR WOULD YOU RATHER WE *FIGHT?*
ALL RIGHT. LET'S BEGIN.

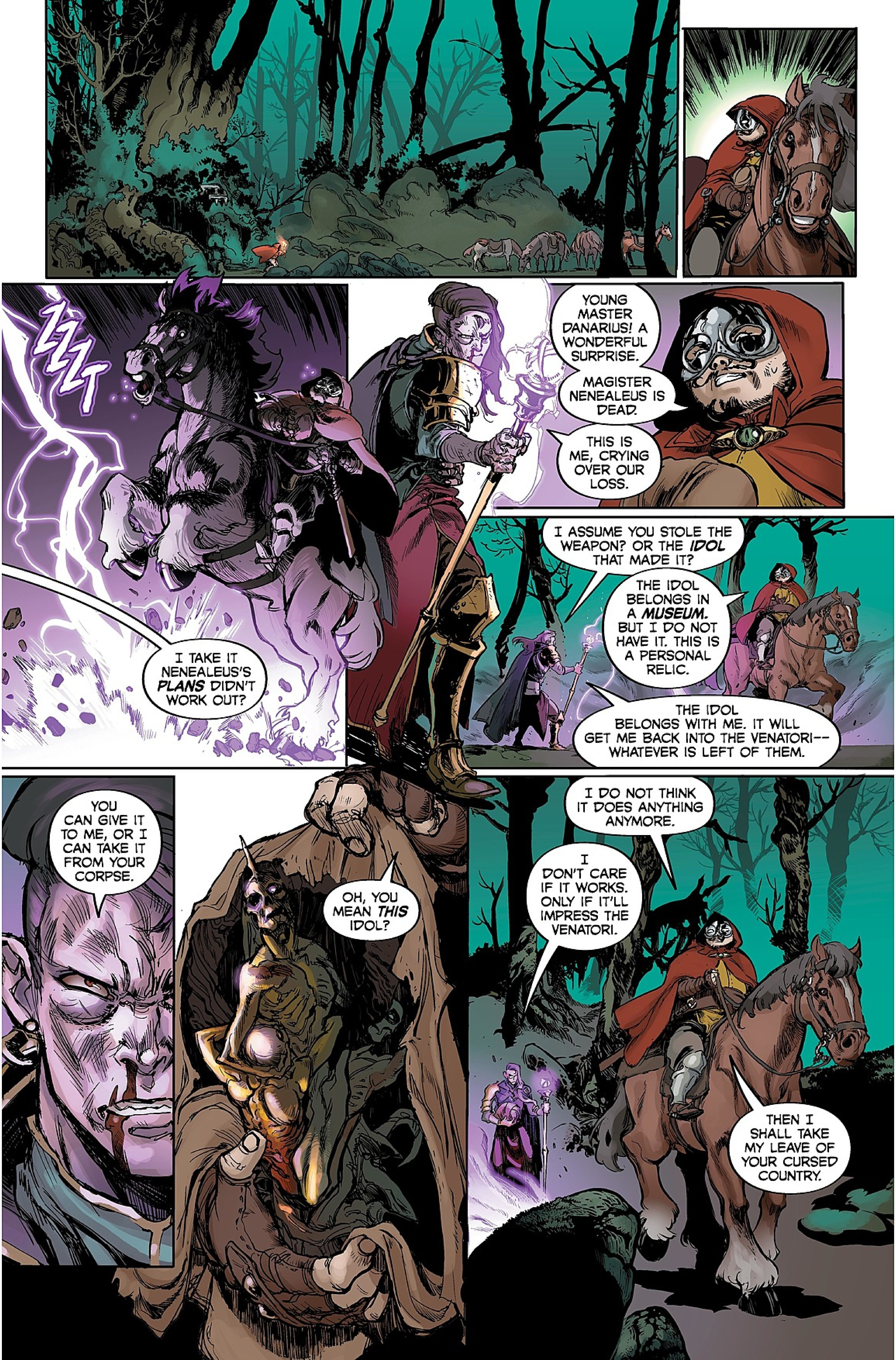

CLANNG!
WELL DONE.
BUT THAT ONLY WORKS ON MAGES...
...WHO *CANNOT* FOCUS WITHOUT THEIR *WEAPON.*
WHY WOULD YOU *EVER* THINK THAT WOULD WORK--
...ON... ME...?
BECAUSE... I DON'T FIGHT *ALONE.*
CLANG

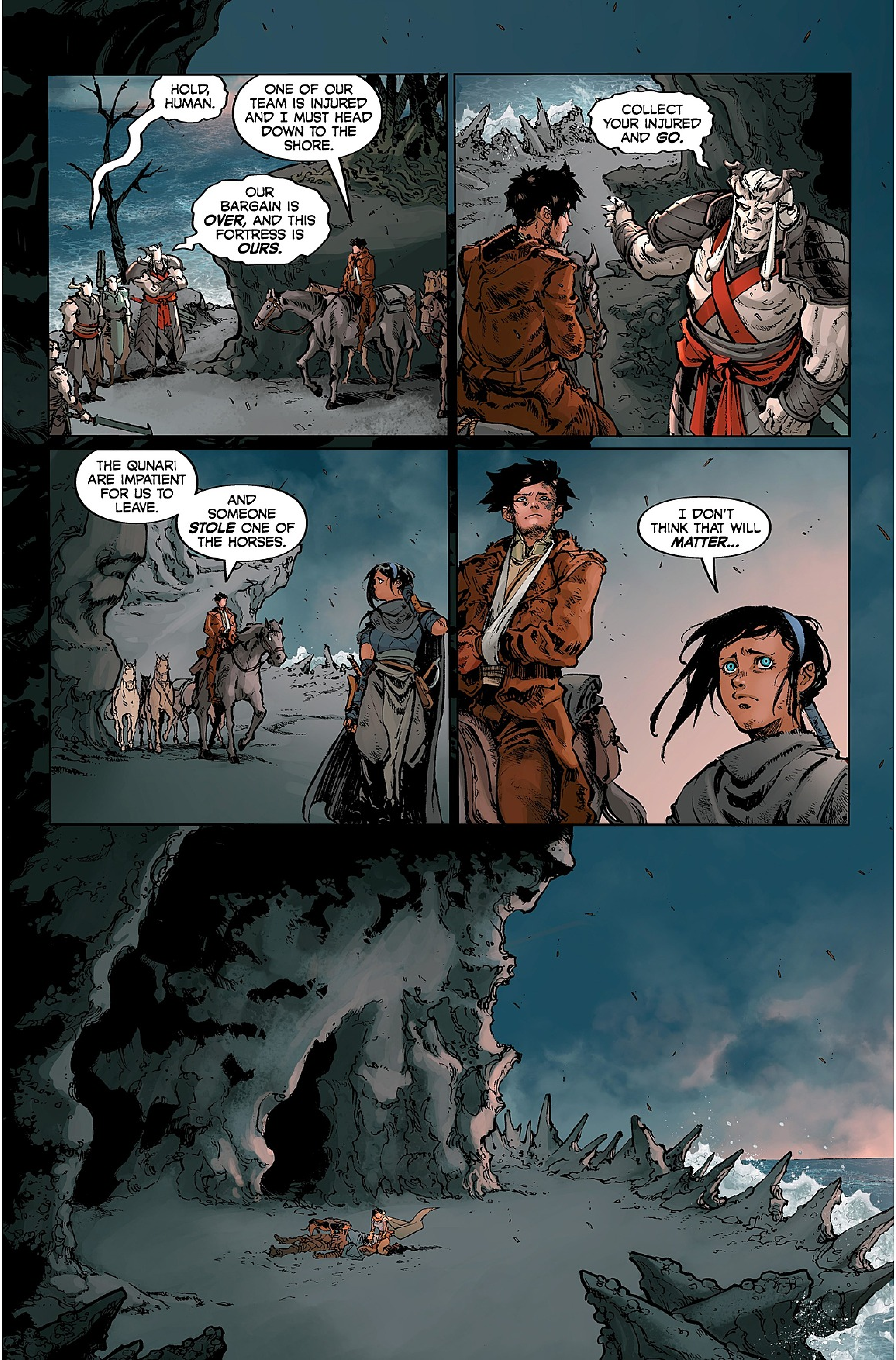

‹WITHOUT THE **MAGE** CONTROLLING IT, THE **DRAGON** HAS BECOME CONFUSED. KILL IT BEFORE IT **RECOVERS.**›
NO!
IT'S ***INNOCENT.***
WHICH WAS STUCK IN HERE. IT WILL ***FLEE*** TO BETTER TERRAIN.
IT'S A ***DRAGON.***
I HAVE A BETTER TARGET FOR YOU...

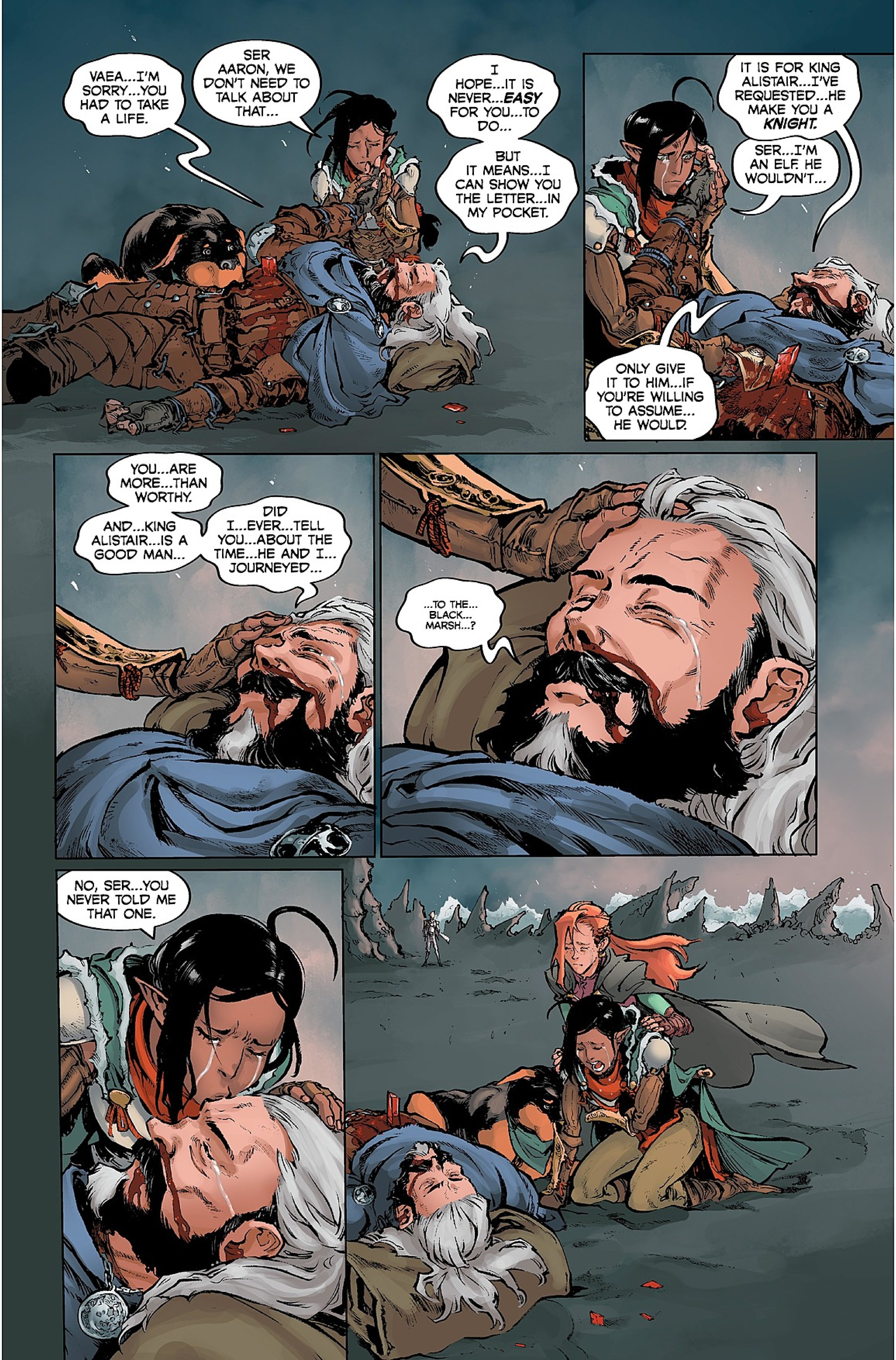

HIS WOUNDS ARE FULLY HEALED. HE MAY BE *UNKILLABLE.*
WE CANNOT *RETREAT.* IF HE RUNS AMOK...
WE SHOULD HELP THEM.
I AM *FINE.*
YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO--
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
THIS IS *MY* FAULT.
YOU *THINK?*
I ONLY WANTED TO SEE WHAT THESE ARTIFACTS AND WEAPONS *DID.* I DIDN'T MEAN TO CREATE THIS...MONSTER.
BUT I THINK I KNOW THE KEY TO STOPPING HIM.
HE FEEDS ENERGY TO THE SWORD FROM THE RED LYRIUM IN HIS VEINS. AND IN TURN, THE SWORD *HEALS* HIS WOUNDS.

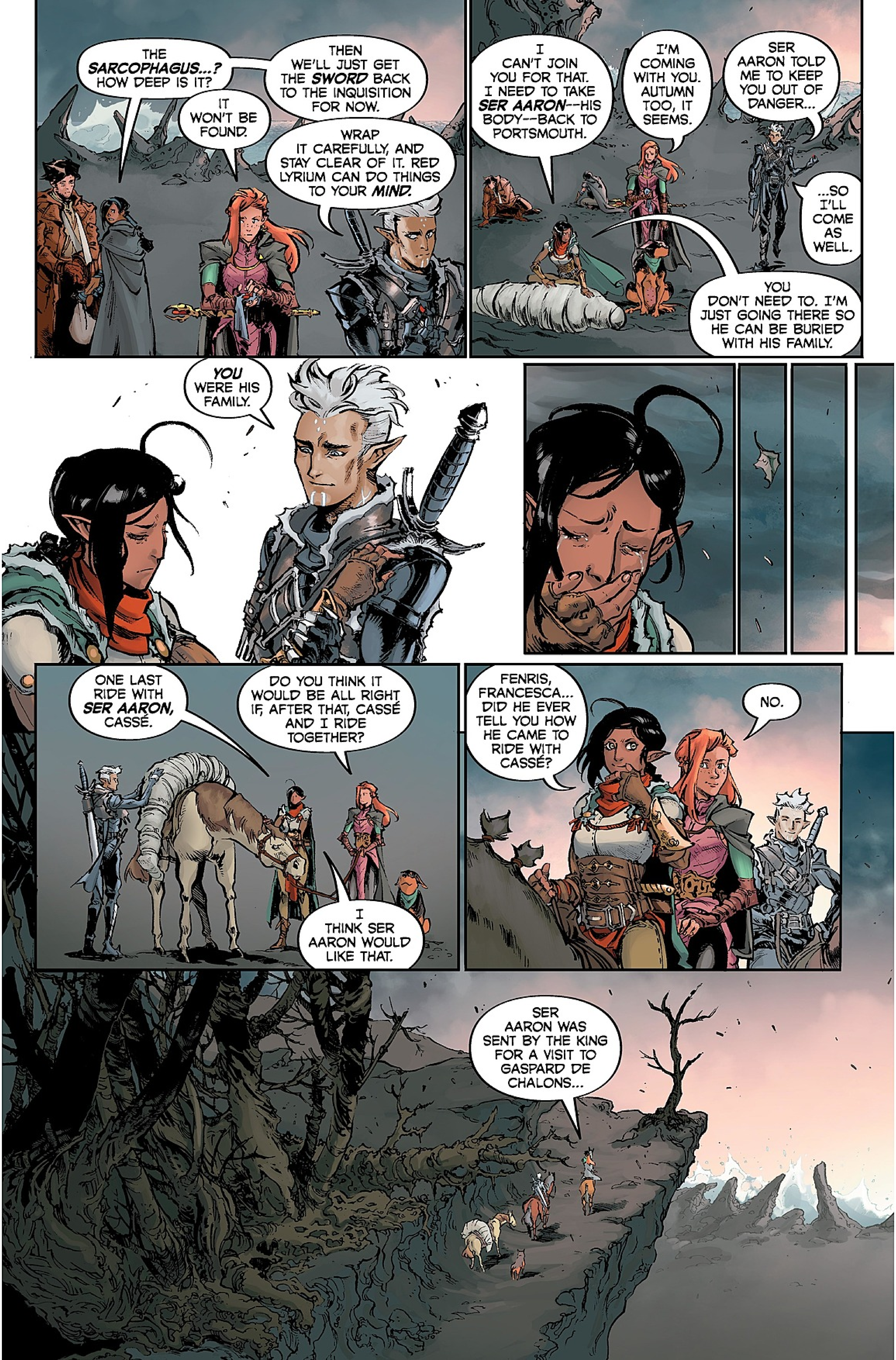

FENRIS, HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU ABOUT THE TIME I FOUGHT A DARKSPAWN EMISSARY IN THE DEEP ROADS?
THIS EMISSARY WAS WIELDING A TWO-HANDED BATTLE HAMMER FORGED BY PARAGON BRANKA HERSELF. HAD KILLED SEVERAL GREY WARDENS WITH IT.
...NO...
NONONONONO...
THE KEY WAS TO--
SER AARON, PLEASE...
SSSHKK
...SEPARATE HIM...FROM HIS WEAPON.
...DON'T.
AARON!

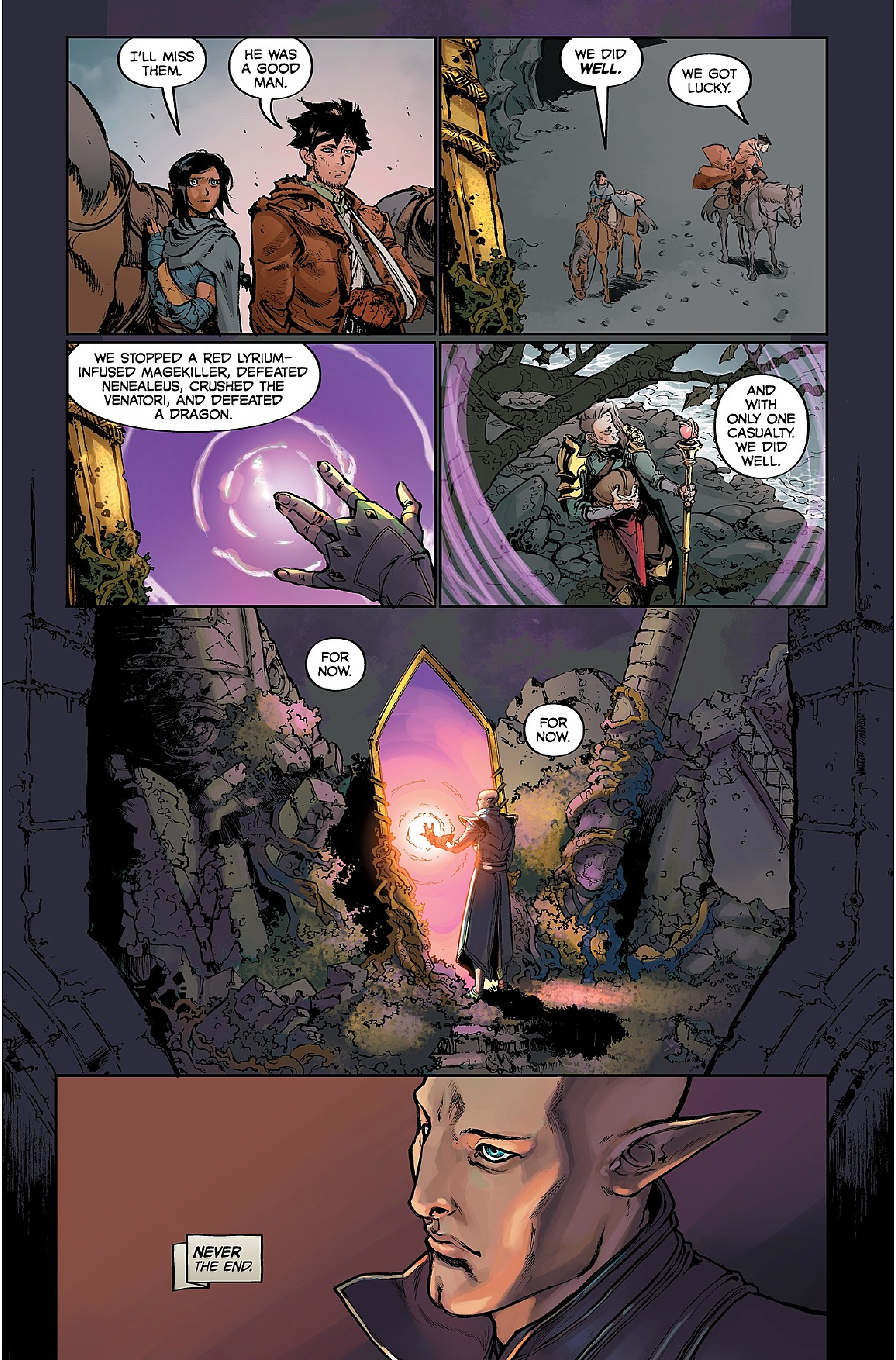

GRRRRR!
...FRIEND?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN MY FRIEND FOR A LONG TIME.
DOOM
MAYBE YOU NEVER WERE.

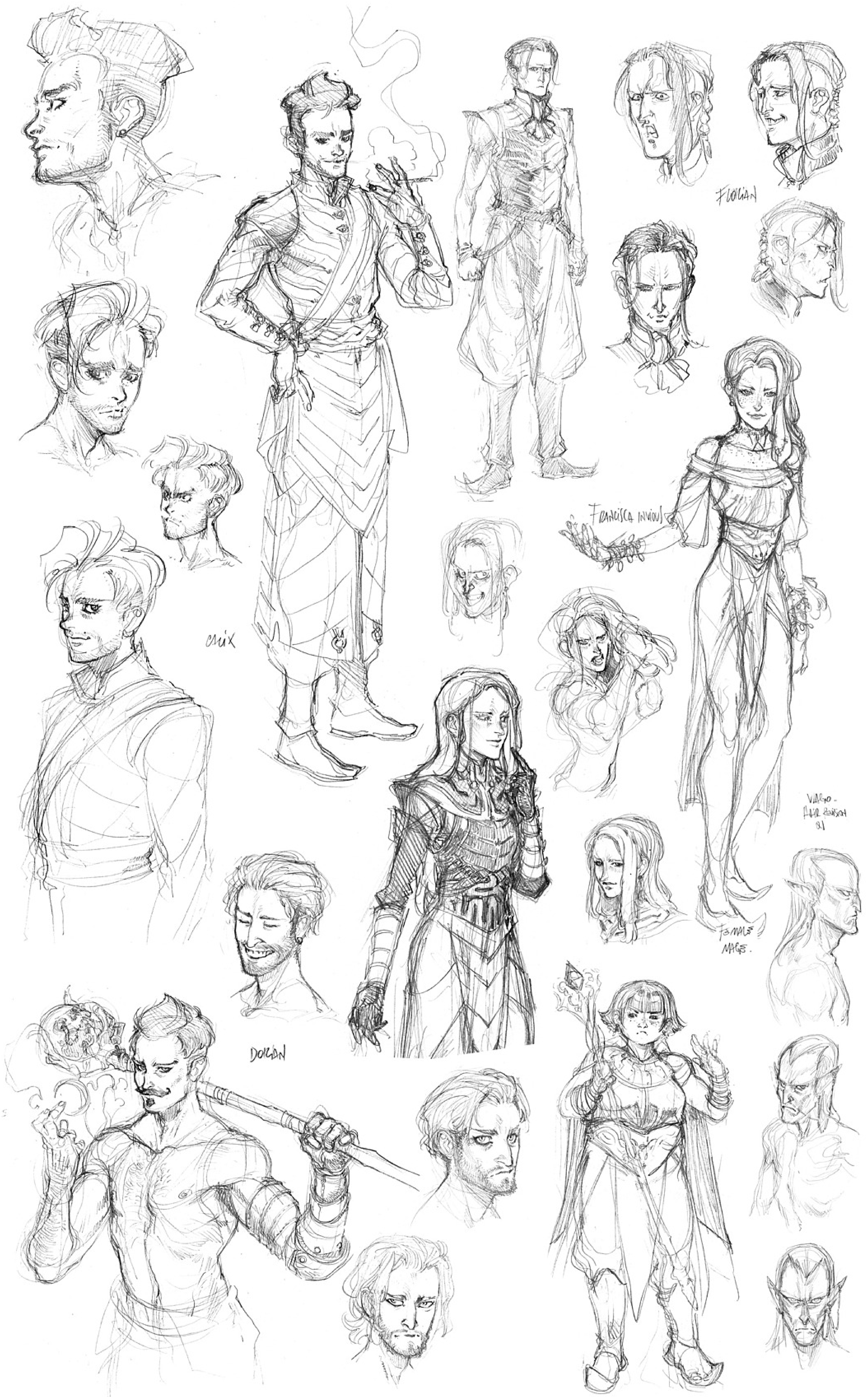

ZZZT
I TAKE IT NENEALEUS'S ***PLANS*** DIDN'T WORK OUT?
YOUNG MASTER DANARIUS! A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.
MAGISTER NENEALEUS IS DEAD.
THIS IS ME, CRYING OVER OUR LOSS.
I ASSUME YOU STOLE THE WEAPON? OR THE ***IDOL*** THAT MADE IT?
THE IDOL BELONGS IN A ***MUSEUM.*** BUT I DO NOT HAVE IT. THIS IS A PERSONAL RELIC.
THE IDOL BELONGS WITH ME. IT WILL GET ME BACK INTO THE VENATORI--WHATEVER IS LEFT OF THEM.
YOU CAN GIVE IT TO ME, OR I CAN TAKE IT FROM YOUR CORPSE.
OH, YOU MEAN ***THIS*** IDOL?
I DO NOT THINK IT DOES ANYTHING ANYMORE.
I DON'T CARE IF IT WORKS. ONLY IF IT'LL IMPRESS THE VENATORI.
THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOUR CURSED COUNTRY.


HOLD, HUMAN.
ONE OF OUR TEAM IS INJURED AND I MUST HEAD DOWN TO THE SHORE.
OUR BARGAIN IS *OVER,* AND THIS FORTRESS IS *OURS.*
COLLECT YOUR INJURED AND *GO.*
THE QUNARI ARE IMPATIENT FOR US TO LEAVE.
AND SOMEONE *STOLE* ONE OF THE HORSES.
I DON'T THINK THAT WILL *MATTER...*


VAEA...I'M SORRY...YOU HAD TO TAKE A LIFE.
SER AARON, WE DON'T NEED TO TALK ABOUT THAT...
I HOPE...IT IS NEVER...*EASY* FOR YOU...TO DO...
BUT IT MEANS...I CAN SHOW YOU THE LETTER...IN MY POCKET.
IT IS FOR KING ALISTAIR...I'VE REQUESTED...HE MAKE YOU A *KNIGHT.*
SER...I'M AN ELF. HE WOULDN'T...
ONLY GIVE IT TO HIM...IF YOU'RE WILLING TO ASSUME... HE WOULD.
YOU...ARE MORE...THAN WORTHY.
AND...KING ALISTAIR...IS A GOOD MAN...
DID I...EVER...TELL YOU...ABOUT THE TIME...HE AND I... JOURNEYED...
...TO THE... BLACK... MARSH...?
NO, SER...YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT ONE.

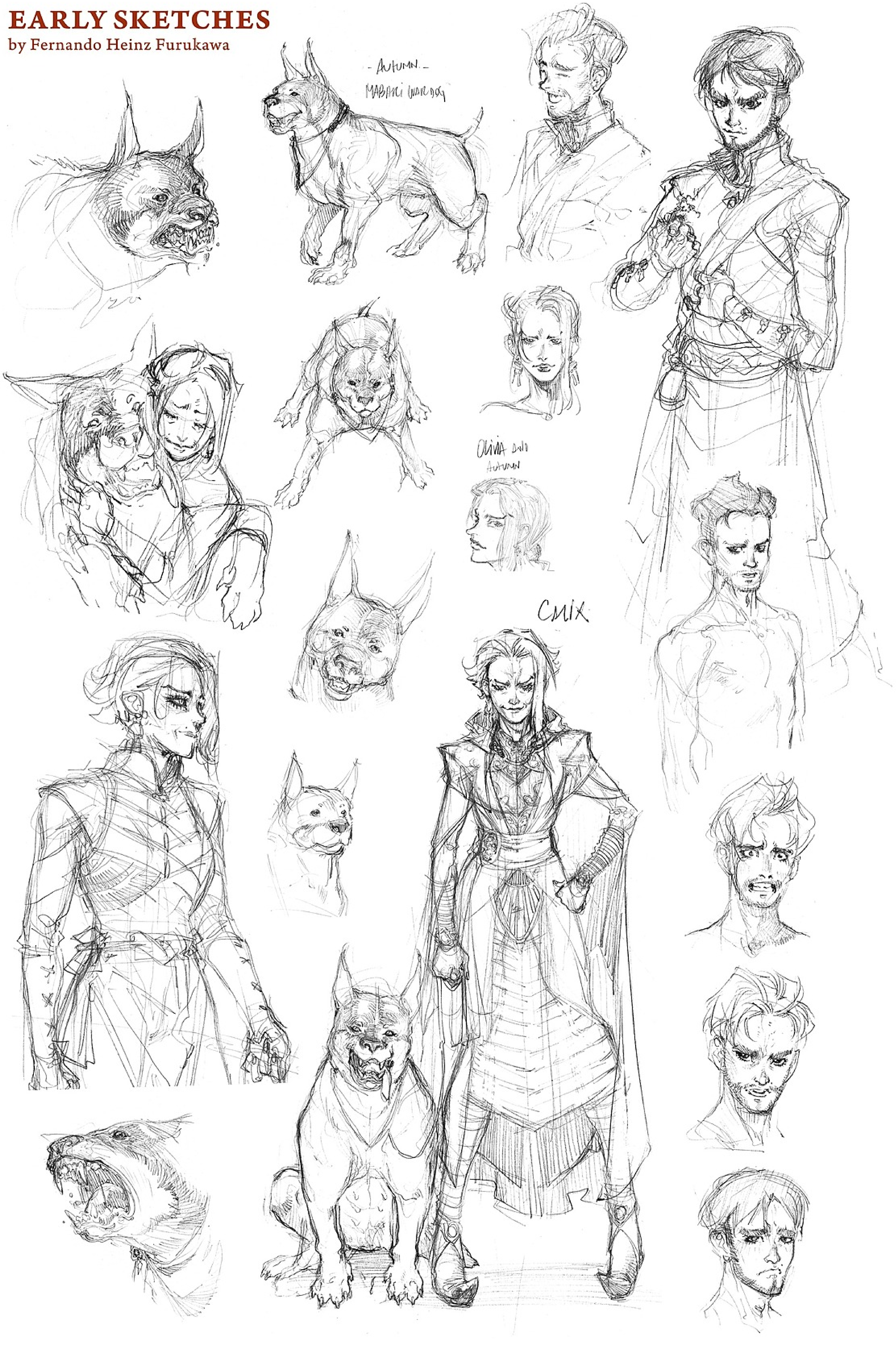

THE *SARCOPHAGUS...?* HOW DEEP IS IT?
IT WON'T BE FOUND.
THEN WE'LL JUST GET THE *SWORD* BACK TO THE INQUISITION FOR NOW.
WRAP IT CAREFULLY, AND STAY CLEAR OF IT. RED LYRIUM CAN DO THINGS TO YOUR *MIND.*
I CAN'T JOIN YOU FOR THAT. I NEED TO TAKE *SER AARON*--HIS BODY--BACK TO PORTSMOUTH.
I'M COMING WITH YOU. AUTUMN TOO, IT SEEMS.
SER AARON TOLD ME TO KEEP YOU OUT OF DANGER...
...SO I'LL COME AS WELL.
YOU DON'T NEED TO. I'M JUST GOING THERE SO HE CAN BE BURIED WITH HIS FAMILY.
YOU WERE HIS FAMILY.
ONE LAST RIDE WITH *SER AARON,* CASSÉ.
DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT IF, AFTER THAT, CASSÉ AND I RIDE TOGETHER?
I THINK SER AARON WOULD LIKE THAT.
FENRIS, FRANCESCA... DID HE EVER TELL YOU HOW HE CAME TO RIDE WITH CASSÉ?
NO.
SER AARON WAS SENT BY THE KING FOR A VISIT TO GASPARD DE CHALONS...

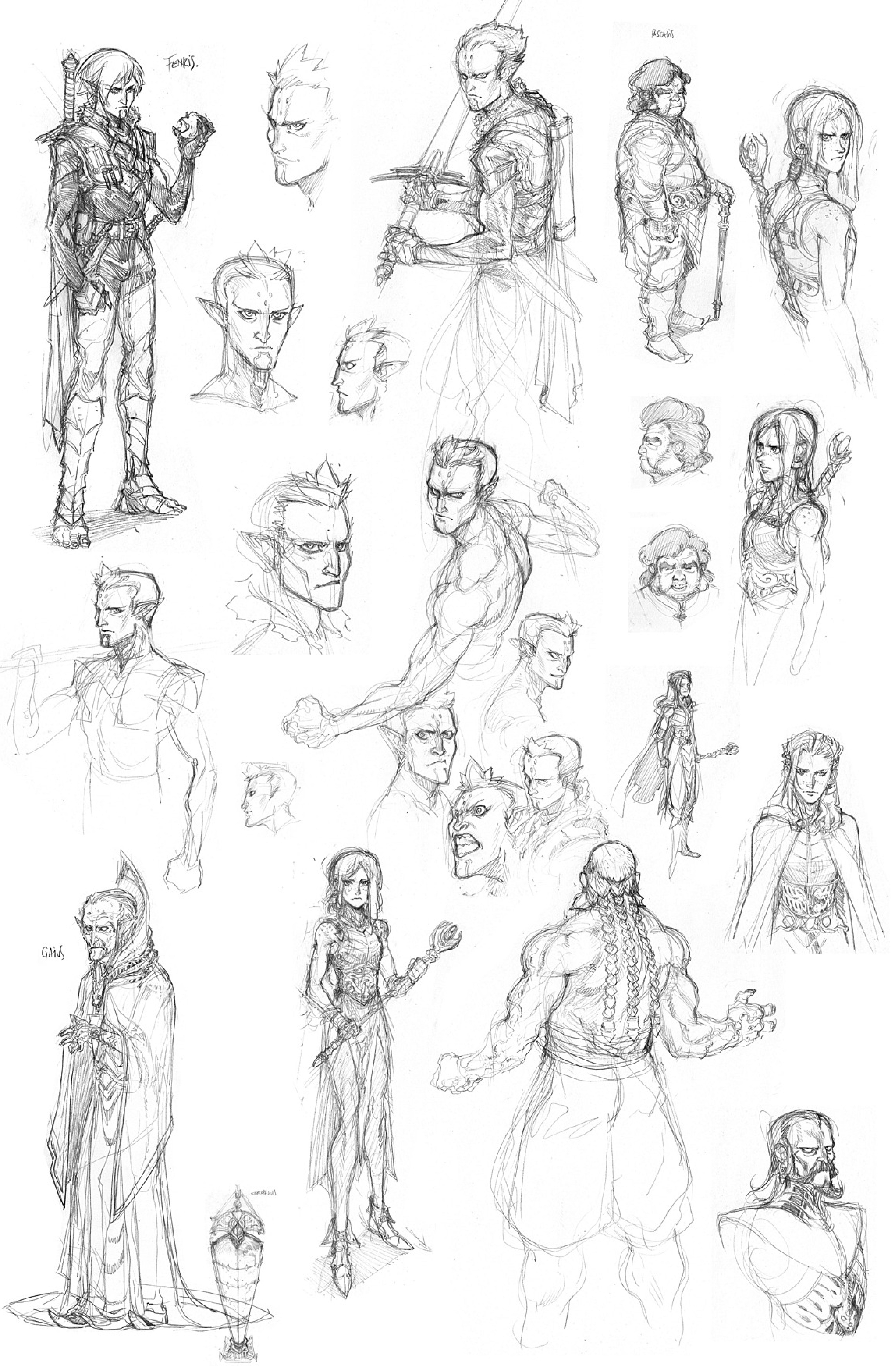

I'LL MISS THEM.
HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
WE DID *WELL.*
WE GOT LUCKY.
WE STOPPED A RED LYRIUM-INFUSED MAGEKILLER, DEFEATED NENEALEUS, CRUSHED THE VENATORI, AND DEFEATED A DRAGON.
AND WITH ONLY ONE CASUALTY. WE DID WELL.
FOR NOW.
FOR NOW.
NEVER THE END.

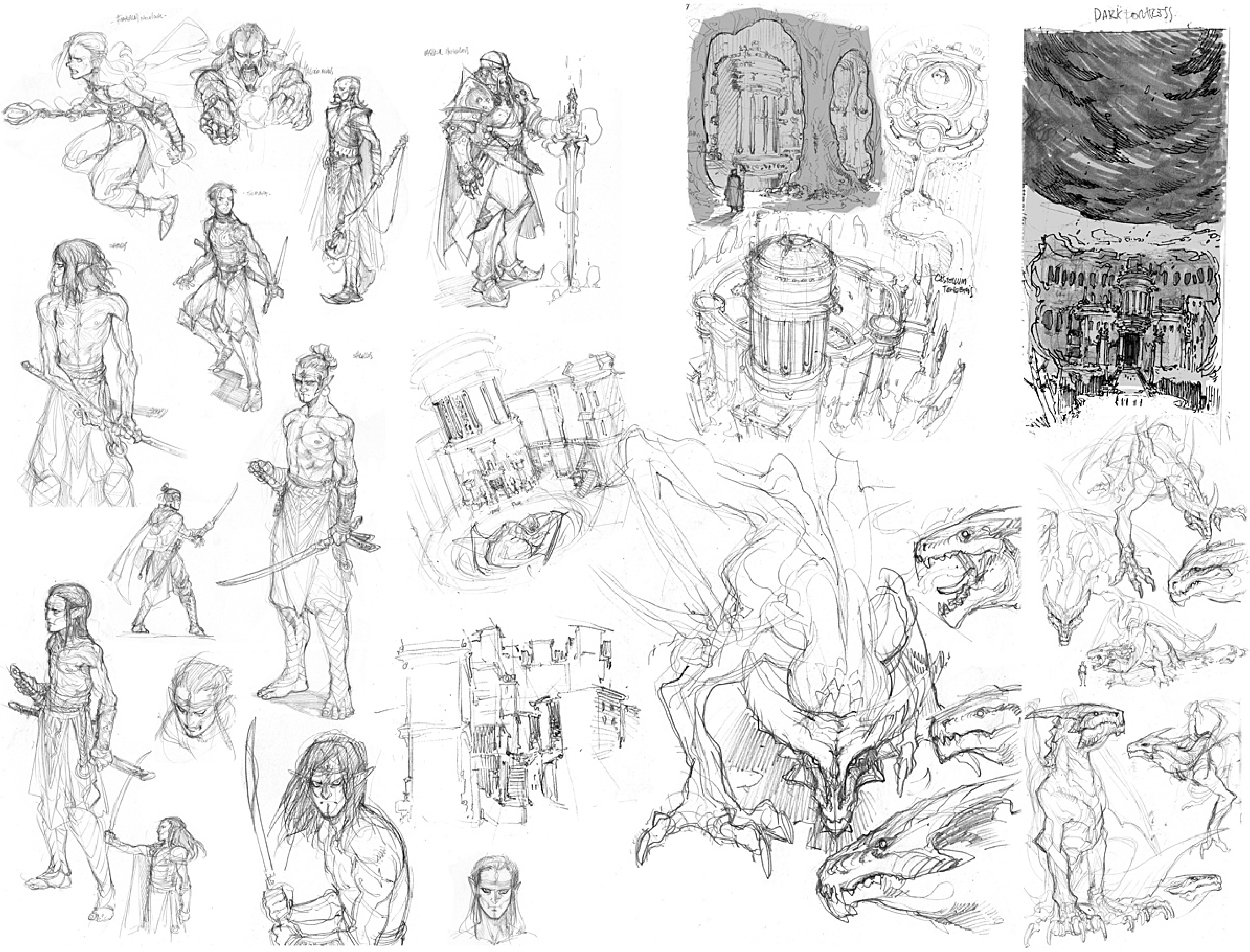

FLORIAN
Francisca Invious
enix
VIAGO -
HAIR LENGTH
OK
FEMALE
MAGE.
DORIAN

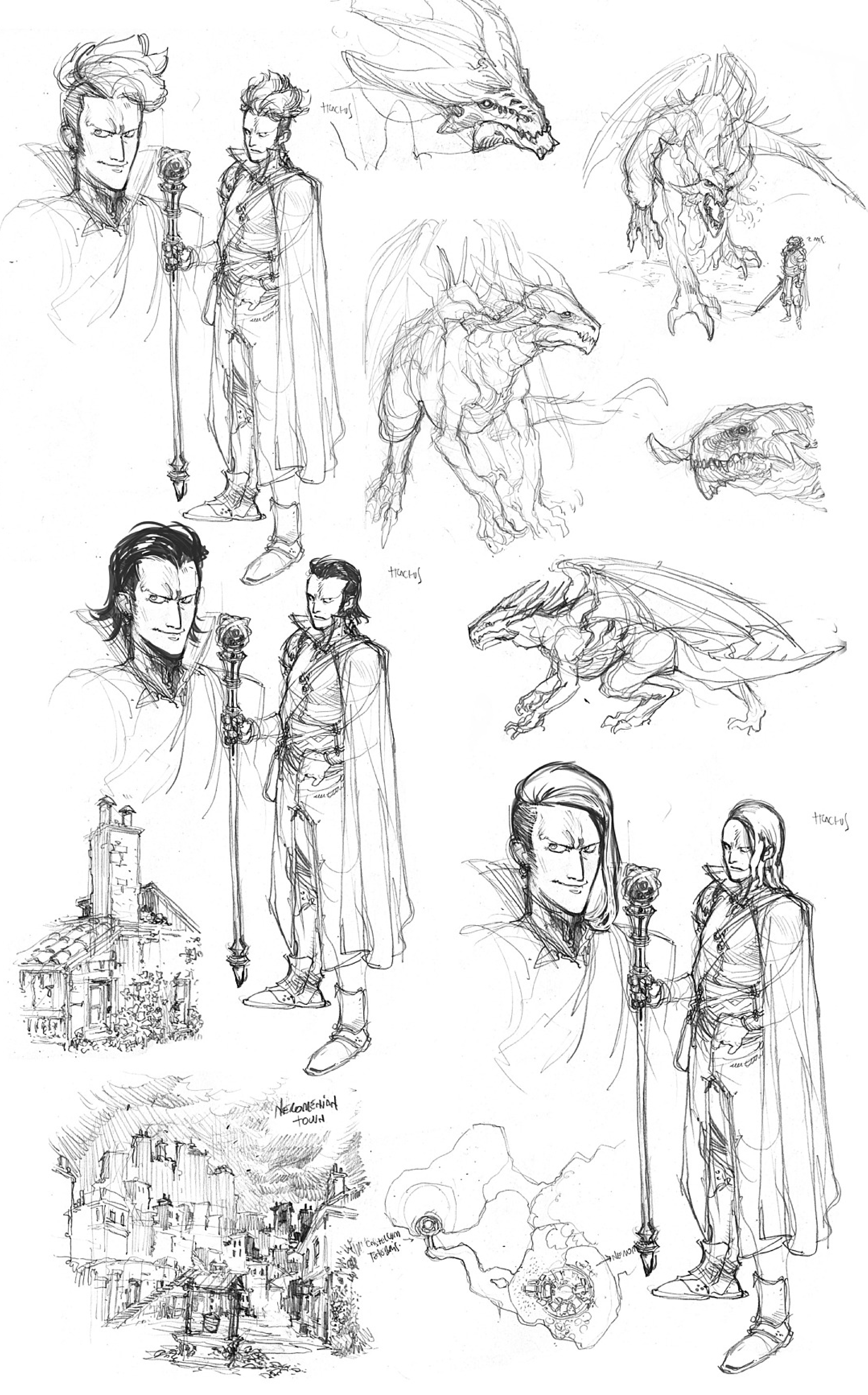
EARLY SKETCHES

by Fernando Heinz Furukawa


- AUTUMN -
MABARI WARDOG
OLIVIA AND
AUTUMN
CALIX


FENRIS.
PASCAIS
GAIUS


CASTELLUM TENEBRIS
DARK FORTRESS.


Tiachus
2 mts.
Tiachus
Tiachus
Necromenian town
Castellum Tenebrar.
Necrom

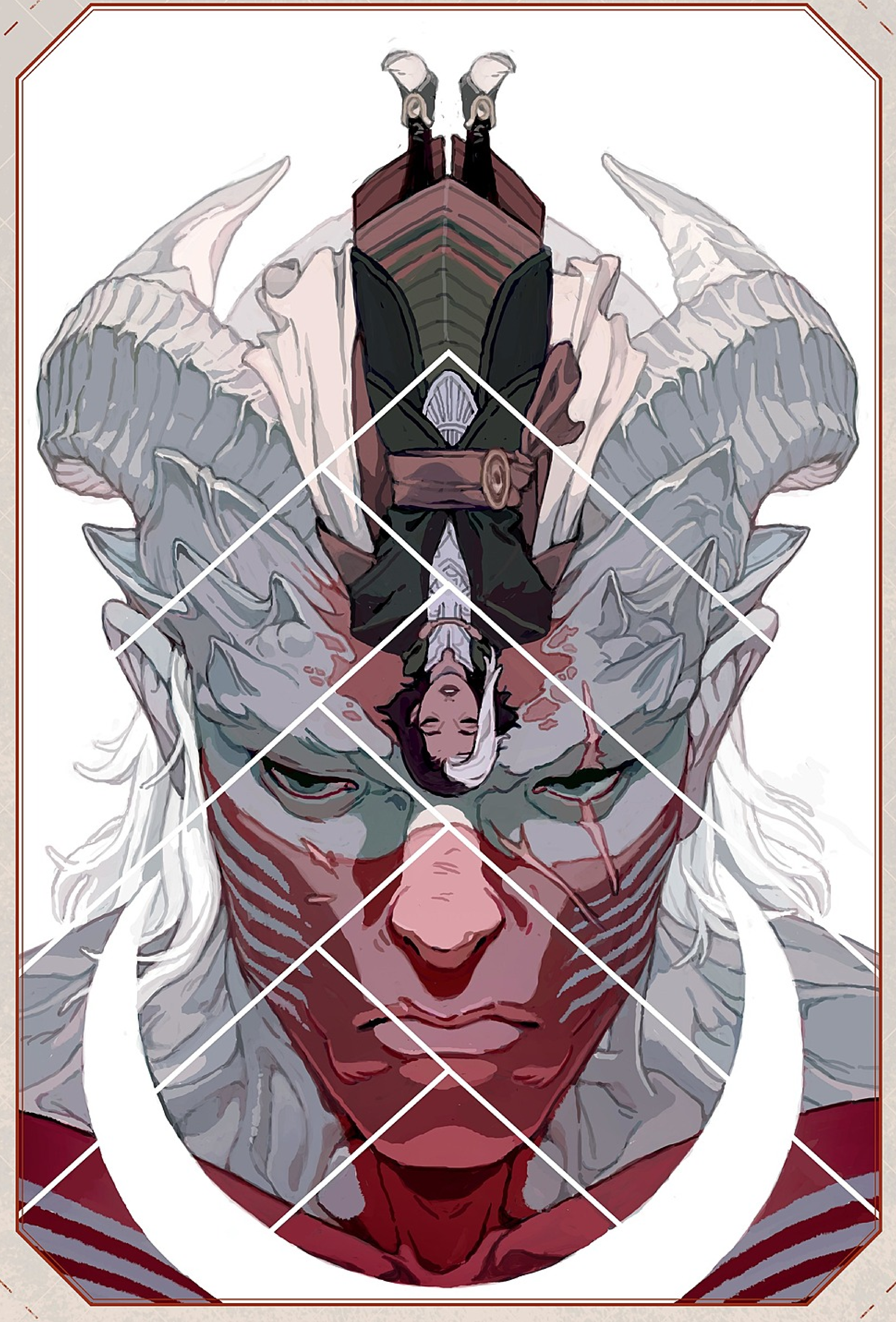
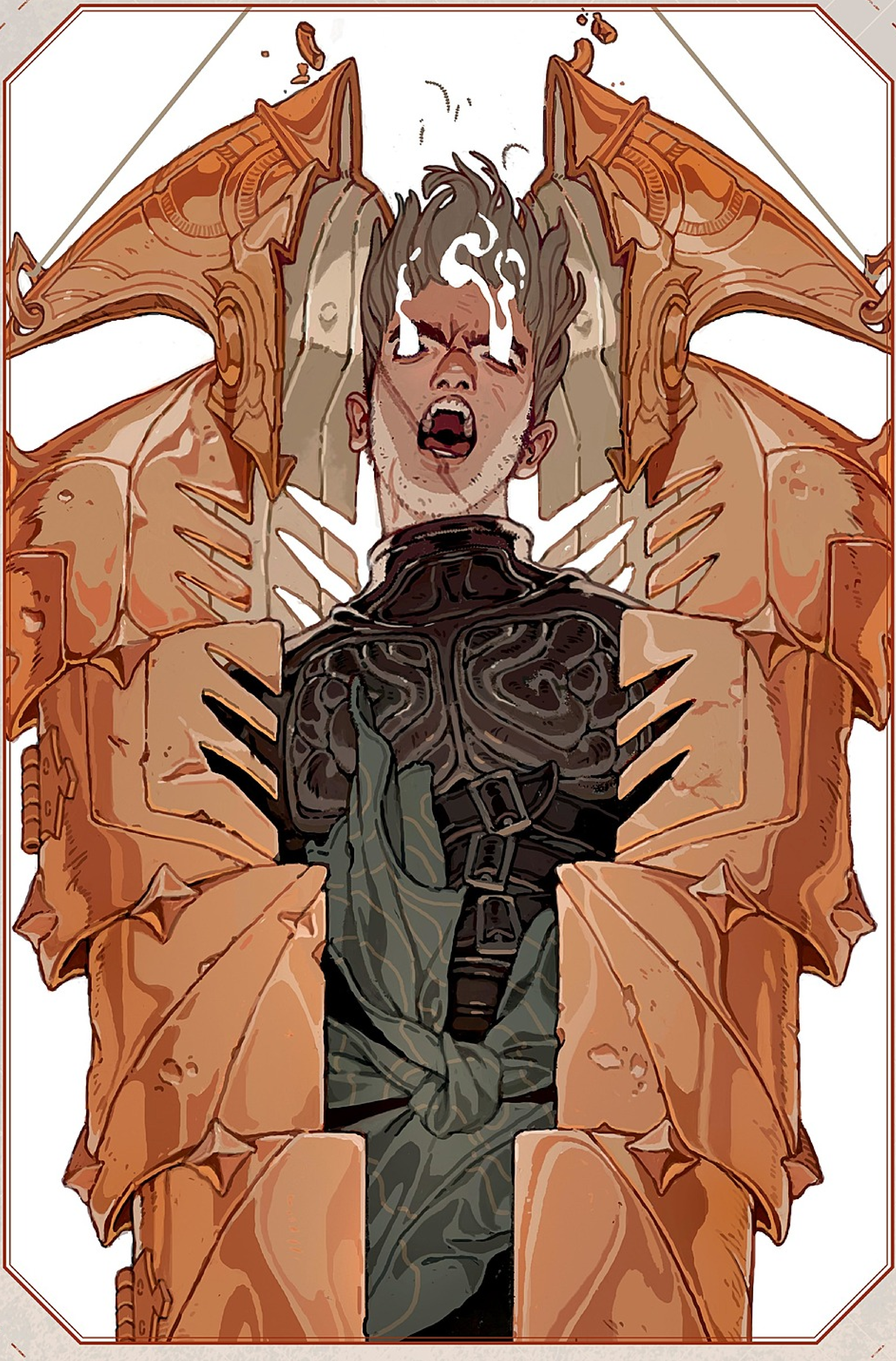


Illustration by Sachin Teng



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DRAGON AGE™

WRAITHS OF TEVINTER

THE TRILOGY THAT PITS FENRIS AND THE INQUISITION AGAINST THE VENATORI FOR THE FATE OF THEDAS IN A SINGLE VOLUME FOR THE FIRST TIME!

* * *

When a red lyrium artifact of devastating power surfaces in the Tevinter Imperium, the Inquisition mobilizes knight Ser Aaron Hawthorne, elven thief Vaea, and magekillers Tessa Forsythia and Marius to retrieve it. Along the way, they will acquire a fledgling con artist and a troubled mage as allies, as well as Fenris, the legendary Blue Wraith. But the Venatori have mobilized forces of their own, and it will take cunning, bravery, and sacrifice to stop their dark intentions from being realized.

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DARK HORSE BOOKS